



## Window on Jordan

AMMAN (Star)—At last the wet weather is here. It was beginning to feel that winter would never come. Very strange, it was hot steaming weather in the middle of October—looking as if the temperatures were never going to go down.

So last week's sudden downpour took the country by surprise and in spite of the damages incurred by the drencher, it was a very welcome change from the hot, humid and sticky climate that is increasingly becoming the norm in this neck of the woods.

The sudden rains after a hot spell reflected the area's extremes. The storm, accompanied by thunder, was short lived but it made its point in a very

short time, pouring down thick and fast as if it was nobody's business. For a good few hours, heavy rain brought life to a still, it was an unbelievable sight, one that was cherished for the moment it represented.

The pour and high winds didn't only effect this country. As part of the regional weather system, it caused havoc in the Palestinian territories, Israel and Egypt causing widespread destruction and death in some cases.

In fact Jordan got away with minor scratches compared with what happened in Jericho and in some parts of Israel, with great losses being incurred to

agricultural crops. In this respect Jericho was affected most with losses reaching up to millions of dollars.

But whatever the consequences, the pain and agony of the harsh climatic conditions, the rains are badly needed in this part of the world. What happened last week was not unusual. Freak weather is actually the norm rather than the exception. Every year this happens, and countless lives are washed away by freak weather conditions.

This year, the deluge claimed a different sort of

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# The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Arab Bank's half yearly balance sheet as of 30 June 1997 and 1996.

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Tel. 5515111, Fax. 5516820

AMMAN, 23-29 OCTOBER 1997, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 22, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

## Amman Third District:

# Heavyweights are staying home but competition is heating up nonetheless

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer  
AMMAN'S THIRD electoral district has always been described a battlefield. Since the 1989 elections, the Third District has seen tough competition between business tycoons, political heavyweights, fiery opposition figures and traditional loyalists. It's been also called the Whales District in reference to the big names that usually compete for one of its five seats, three Muslim, one Christian and one Circassian/Chechen.

absence of conservative Islamists and influential liberal figures from the race. Both have decided to boycott the elections. One such figure, a moderate Jordanian of Palestinian origin, is Taher Al Masri. The former premier has held his seat for two consecutive terms. But now he has opted to stay away in protest of government policies.

Other famous Third District contenders include a number of former legislators who had a remarkable impact on the Lower House, such as Faris Al Nabisi, Laith Shbeilat, Fakhri Kawar, and Mansour Saif Eddin-Mo'arrad.

Since the traditional runners are boycotting the race, observers believe it is now an open day for this district, especially with regard to the Muslim seats. However, the competi-

tion for both Christian and Circassian/Chechen seats could develop into a die-hard race after all.

Twenty candidates (28 in 1993 elections) are competing for the district's five seats. The number of registered voters has reached 117,217.

Eleven Muslim candidates are competing for one of the three Muslim seats. The most prominent runner is businessman Ali Abu Al-Raghib, who is also a former minister and deputy. Abu Al Raghib is considered as the candidate of the business community in that district. In 1993 he won 8162 votes, about 18 percent of the total number of vot-

ers in this constituency.

According to observers, Abu Al Raghib's chances are favorable, leaving the rest of candidates to fight for the two remaining Muslim seats. Muhammad Khair Al Kilani, who failed to make it in the last elections, is running this year under the list of the center-right, National Constitutional Party (NCP). His chances may improve this year due to NCP's back-up and the absence of his relative, IAF candidate Ibrahim Al Kilani from the race.

The rest of the candidates competing for the Muslim seats are first time runners.

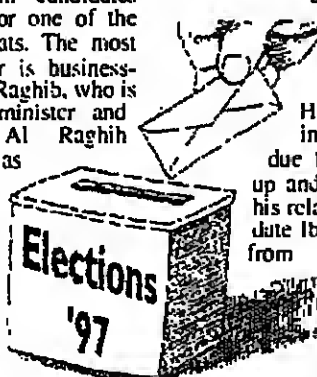
her of votes from Mrs. Toujan Faisal, the only female legislator in the last Lower House. Mrs. Faisal is facing problems with the feminist sector (see related story).

Observers believe Haddadin is the least dependent on the Christian vote, taking into account his record in the last Parliament and the political structure of the Third District which is dominated by Ba'athist sympathizers. Nafa', on the other hand, will be depending on Christian voters and will have to share them with the other four Christian candidates, one of whom is a previous comrade, Mr. Issa Mdanat, a reforming communist and a former legislator. Mdanat is heading the United Democratic Party, which is a merger of pan-Arabists and leftists. Mdanat and Nafa' share the same voter structure, with a bonus of few pan-Arabist activists in favor of Mdanat.

However, amidst this mess, the chances of the Christian candidate of the National Constitutional Party, Mr. Farah Al Rahadi, is hanging in the air. The hardline Christian candidate is completely dependent on the Christian vote.

Al Rahadi, took the Christian seat of the Ajloun District with only 850 votes, the least number of votes casted for any of the 80 legislators in the previous Lower House. He is a newcomer to the Third District and his banners talk about a victory he claimed during the previous Parliament, achieving the new year public holiday and allowing the Christian teaching in public schools.

Observers believe Al Rahadi will have to fight hard with another Christian candidate, Mr. Odeh Qawas, who claims to be the candidate of the Christian sector in that district. He also has to face Mrs. Norma Shattara who is competing with an unsure chance of winning.



## Women groups fail to support Faisal Vastly outnumbered female candidates have a tough race to the Dome

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer  
SEVENTEEN WOMEN are contesting the 4 November parliamentary elections, down from 24. Seven women candidates withdrew from the race earlier.

The 17 candidates will face tough competition from male candidates who outnumber them by 31 to one; observers are skeptical that any of them could reach the Lower House.

The outspoken Toujan Faisal, the first Jordanian woman to win a seat in the Lower



Toujan Faisal's bid for another election win looks doubtful

The big battle, however, will be over the Christian seat. Four political parties are competing for this single seat by their first ranking members. Two opposition parties, who refused to abide by the boycott decision of the Islamic-led opposition alliance, are in an arm-twisting battle since they have been at odds over this seat for a long time.

The Jordanian Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party has fielded Mr. Khalil Haddadin, a popular former deputy. Haddadin, a successful contractor, won 1582 votes in the 1993 elections, forming three percent of the total votes cast in this district.

The other opposition party is the Jordanian Communist Party who is running with its sole candidate in this general elections, Mrs. Emily Nafa', an old-guard communist and a prominent activist. The communists, who failed to be represented in the two previous parliaments, had a painful experience in the Third District when the head of the party, Yacoub Zayadeen, lost in the 1989 polls.

As a prominent feminist, Nafa' will take a sizable num-

ber of votes from Mrs. Toujan Faisal, the only female legislator in the last Lower House. Mrs. Faisal is facing problems with the feminist sector (see related story).

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By Joho M. Goshko  
UNITED NATIONS—In an attempt to defuse strong opposition from Russia and France, the United States is backing away from its call for immediate new sanctions against Iraq for interfering with United Nations weapons inspectors and has offered to wait six months for the Security Council to act against Iraq, UN diplomatic sources said Monday.

But, the sources said, the United States wants a commitment that the sanctions automatically would take effect at that time if President Saddam Hussein's government Iraq continues to defy UN orders. So far, Russia and France have not accepted that condition.

At issue is a proposal by the United States and Britain to toughen the sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Iraq to include a ban on international travel by Iraqi military and intelligence officials. The aim is to force Iraq to stop hindering UN inspectors charged with eliminating Saddam's remaining weapons of mass destruction.

Washington began pressing

for the new sanctions in June, but ran into opposition from Russia and France. Both countries have strong economic interests with Baghdad and advocate a more flexible and conciliatory line. After President Clinton intervened with Russian President Boris Yeltsin during the Group of Seven industrial nations summit in July, a compromise was worked out that also won French agreement. It called for the Security Council to give Iraq until Oct. 11 to cooperate with UN inspections or face a travel ban.

That deadline has expired, and the United States and Britain, citing continued Iraqi blocking of inspections, are circulating a resolution that would have the 15-nation council impose the restrictions. But Russia and France, each of which can veto any resolution, are arguing that the council should wait longer before resorting to further sanctions.

US officials declined to say whether Washington had offered the compromise described by other diplomatic sources. Bill Richardson, the

US ambassador here, told reporters: "The last resolution said there would be additional sanctions if they don't comply. We are following the letter of the law, and we don't want to send them a signal that they can violate UN sanctions."

However State Department Spokesman James P. Rubin hinted that the United States is looking for a compromise. Citing the need for unity within the council, he said, "We are going to work to try to achieve again the maximum support for the maximally strong resolution." Rubin also said that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spoke over the weekend with French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov. France hopes to gain lucrative contracts and concessions in the Iraqi oil industry once sanctions are ended. Russia is owed billions of dollars for weapons sold to Saddam's military by the now defunct Soviet Union but cannot collect until Iraq again begins earning oil revenues.

Primakov, in particular, long has been a strong advocate within the Russian government of seeking a softer international line toward Iraq. These two countries have continued to call for a go-slow approach despite testimony by Richard Butler, head of the UN special commission charged with locating Iraq's hidden weapons programs, that Iraqi officials blocked or delayed five inspections during September.

They also have brushed aside a defiant statement last week by Iraq's UN ambassador, Nizar Hamdon. Asserting that Iraq "cannot continue forever with this very slow procrastinating (disarmament) process," Hamdon warned, "Iraq would have to see the end of this tunnel. But if this does not happen and Iraq continues to be in the dark on its future, Iraq will have to reconsider the situation and take the appropriate decision."

# Tokyo women's chance to ogle

By Mary Jordan

TOKYO—Dante wags his sweaty bottom, immodestly cleaved by the thinnest of thongs, at a crowd of Japanese women who scream his name. Tony and Enrique, who have just peeled off American football uniforms, pump bare hips to the pounding music and smile at the admiring howls from their delirious audience.

Tokyo is known for sex joints, featuring naked women in acts that range from coy to raunchy. A favorite male practice is to dine at clubs where sushi is served with a naked woman as the platter.

But at J-men's, it's men—mainly American men—who strip to G-strings for the entertainment of Japanese women who come here by the busload, some three or four times a week.

"This is the best, the best. I never get tired of coming here," says Satomi Hotta, a 20-year-old college student who pays the \$42 cover charge as many nights as she can. She knows all the

dancers by name. "It totally changes my mood. My life is so boring otherwise."

J-men's is Tokyo's first male strip joint, and the nightly crowds are proof some Japanese women are sick of sitting at home while their husbands or boyfriends are out on the town. Japan is still a male-dominated society, where men work long days and spend long evenings out with colleagues.

Women are expected to tend to home and children.

"This makes me feel good," says Hotta. She spends her hard-earned cash to watch hunks stripping out of flight suits and singing "Wild Thing." Or peeling off pinstriped baseball uniforms and doing provocative moves with Louisville sluggers.

She loves Tony, Enrique, Mario, Bobby, Colin and Dante—well-oiled, big-musled lads who come dancing through dry ice smoke. It's a thrill, a kick, a shiver of fun to watch the guys singing "Good Vibrations" while wearing leis around their necks and little

eke. There is visible swooning when, at the finale, Dante Henderson croons Kenny Rogers' sugary ballad "Lady."

At 6-4 and 200 well-packaged pounds, Henderson is lead singer of the J-men's revue. He sings surprisingly well.

"Dante! Dante! Dante! Very cool!" screams Rumiko Nakamura, 22.

"He really does have talent," another woman says to those around her in the J-men's theater, where seats are in neat rows and drinking never gets out of hand. "There are some seriously cute guys up there!" says another woman.

Some of the dancers lean over and kiss women in the audience. Sometimes they drag a shy one onstage for a dance or nuzzle. A hug from a big strapping guy called Tony goes a long way here, judging from the giggly, giddy responses. At no time are the performers completely naked though they come close.

The hook is young American guys, with the occasional Englishman or Mexican, singing and dancing in decidedly American garb. Besides sports uniforms, sometimes they are in top hat and tails, or full US military uniforms.

"Ooooh, they're so cute, don't you think?" says Nakamura.

Henderson, 28, is from Kansas City but worked as a singer and dancer in Los Angeles before coming to Japan in 1996. "We're just taking our shirts and pants off. I'm not ashamed of it," he says. Strippers might feel awkward or embarrassed the first time, he adds, "but it is something you get used to. After a while it's no big deal."

Some of the guys are former dancers from Chippendale's male strip clubs. Nobody does anything rude, says Henderson. And, he said, it's a kick to entertain Japanese women, who are often restrained. "American women are more willing to let loose, they show more physical and verbal responses."

Henderson wouldn't reveal how much money he makes, but says it keeps him doing this for a living. He wants to sing professionally, and, "I hope that when I look back on my career, I'll be able to say that this is where I got my start."

At the end of the show, the lights come up

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World Report



## Life on the streets

## Tough task for social workers

By Ibtisam Al Awadat  
Special to The Star

HER NAME is Jamila which in Arabic means beautiful. The 24-year-old deserves her name. With a child on one arm, who couldn't have been more than two years old, she was sitting in front of a medical center begging for charity.

But when Jamila saw the force, which is made up of a policeman, a conduct

supervisor, and a representative from the Ministry of Social Development, she tried to run away.

The job of this team is to apprehend beggars and take them to the Center of Classification for Special Cases for beggars and vagabonds. Jamila is taken in with her little baby Zein without any resistance. "Our campaigns began last July, working 12 hours daily in big cities like Amman, Zarqa and Irbid to find out more about these people."

their motives for begging, and their social conditions." All Samara, chief of the Mendicancy Dept., at the Social Affairs Ministry, says. The program he is involved with is called "The Social Precautionary Program for Protecting Childhood and Juveniles."

Jamila continues to weep and plead with the officials to let her go home, reiterating that this is her first time. But after an hour she admits that she resorted to begging on streets before. Her husband works as a coffee vendor and her family knows that she begs on the streets; she leaves her other three-year-old son, with her aunt.

The baby girl smiles to officials as her mother weeps and pleads. Samira was the second catch. She was caught begging at the gates of one of the hospitals in Amman, while the others got away.

The same scenario was repeated, denying

that she is begging but later admitting it: "I have orphans, with no one to take care of them, what shall I do?"

But this cannot be the only motive because as Mr Samara says if she is really poor she can get benefit from the Charity Fund of the Ministry of Social Affairs. "There are other motives as one of our social study suggests: first it's a quick way of making money as they become 'professional beggars', then a result of family break-up, the absence of the father or the death of one of the parents, finally it's poverty and unemployment."

As our tour continued, the policeman stopped as she saw what she called a suspect: a woman with a little boy walking in the market. "I recognize beggars after years of experience," she says as rushed out of the bus to run after the woman.

The woman tries to run away as her three-year-old boy began to cry. Nadia resists, yelling and kicking. After a scuffle, the policeman manages to bring her into the bus.

"Yesterday we took in four children, three are brothers whose ages vary from 5 to 10 years," says Ibrahim the supervisor. "They were begging near the traffic lights, which is a strategic place for them."

Begging takes place in many forms. Mr Samara says, "Asking for money near mosques, hospitals, and houses is one form. There is also the veiled begging like selling simple things such as flowers and chewing gums by children." Mr Samara adds "others take advantage of their real or fake handicap. And we notice that beggars make use of their children or even rent babies to influence pedestrians."

In the Center of Classification and Care of Special Cases in Umm Al Assaker, in the first floor, we found old men, beggars, and people who are mentally handicapped.

"Also we have what we call humanitarian cases, those who have no one to look after them, so they are left vagabonding in the streets," Mr Mohammad Al Shoaibi, the director of this center, says.

On the second floor we saw females of different ages. Sitting is a woman with



One of the babies that is suspected of being used for begging

her two-month old baby. The place is tidy and clean, however, in another room the children were sleeping.

"When we receive beggars in the center, we study the condition of each one. If the beggar is poor then we send him to the Charity Fund for a monthly allowance," Mr Al Shoaibi says. "If the beggar is what we term a 'professional' and a repeated one, then he is taken to court."

Article 389 of the Penal Code stipulates that "If it's the first time, the beggar is sent to jail for no more than three months, or the court can decide to send him to a special society for not less than one year and not more than three years. But if the beggar is a 'professional' then he is sent to jail for not more than one year."

The phenomenon is increasing because beggars can be released easily either by paying bail or by a written undertaking from one of his relatives."

Mr Al Shoaibi says, "One of the beggars told me that even if I was caught, I can pay the bail of JD 15. I can earn up to 30 dinars a day."

"I caught a beggar with JD 4000 in her possession and she was wearing jewelry estimated at JD 13000," Mr Al Shoaibi says.

The number of beggars that we caught by the end of September was 1010. The women who had babies with them numbered 110.

However, the number of campaigns we carried out was 1133.

Mr Samara concludes by saying that the law must be strengthened. "What we need is a full time judge who specializes in begging and vagabonding cases, one that will consult with our ministry before releasing any beggar. What we want is more time to carefully study the social situation of the beggar."

## First rains

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victims: the white election banners festooning our streets were brutally torn down by the gust and left in tatters. Too bad for the candidates.

In a region hungry for water, there must be a way of

taking advantage of the precious rain that comes our way by introducing a more elaborate water harvesting procedure—by directing rain water rather than letting it go to waste as is usually the case. ■

## Prince says the peace process must continue

AMMAN (Star)—His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said that His Majesty King Hussein's linking the future of the peace process to the saving of Mr Misha's life was an expression of the great concern Jordan has for the lives of its

people.

In an interview with CNN and Time Magazine, Prince Hassan said that the difficulties which have faced Jordan-Israeli relations did not only come as a result of the attempted assassination of Khaled Misha, but from other Israeli measures and breaking of promises made.

Prince Hassan said that the Israeli Prime Minister reacted with "deep regret" to the assassination attempt.

Answering a question about whether Mr Netanyahu realized the operation was a terrible mistake or he was just sorry it happened the Prince said "There was no doubt about that."

However the Crown Prince stressed that "Arab blood is as dear to us as Jewish blood" is dear to Israel. "In fact, the blood of all people in this region should become a shared concern, we cannot take selective positions."

Prince Hassan said that Misha's case was solved in a way that secured an Israeli commitment not to repeat such acts, and sent a strong message that Jordan "is a sovereign



Prince Hassan

country and will not accept James Bond-like attempts on the streets of Amman."

"It simply cannot be accepted, that acts of terror and violence are committed in the streets of the other, when two countries like Israel and Jordan are opposed to such acts of terrorism, and violence, the Crown Prince added.

In a reply to a question by critics who argue that the attackers should have been tried in Jordan, Prince Hassan said "I say to them that it was

"a policy decision that took note of the realities on ground and the long-term interests of the country."

"We have signed a peace treaty and we say to those critics that it is better to light a candle than to curse the dark. Let's use the peace treaty to make our views forcefully to the other side," the Crown Prince added.

"The good news," said Prince Hassan "is that Jordanian prisoners in Israel have been released, that our respect for human life...have been recognized and respected..." ■

## Tokyo women's ...

Continued from page 1

and the dancers mingle with the crowd. Many seem twice as tall as the Japanese patrons—making it that much easier for the women to slip money into their jockstraps. It's not real money: J-men's has a vending machine where you put in a bill worth about \$8 and get two vouchers worth \$4 each back. Women slip them into the dancers' jockstraps. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Women groups fail to support Faisal

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House in 1993, is running again for the Circassian/Chechen seat in the Third District. However, Mrs Faisal's chances this time are critical. She received 1885 votes in the 1993 elections, about four percent of the total number of votes cast. Despite the fact she got the advantage of running under the Circassian/Chechen quota, only 30 percent of her constituency voted in her favor. The rest of the votes came from fellow feminists, in addition to Christians and Muslims.

This year Mrs Faisal is being challenged by a strong pro-establishment candidate, Mr Nayef Al Mola, a former general secretary of the Ministry of Information and former head of the Press and Publication Dept., is said to enjoy the support of the Circassian/Chechen community, something which observers believe Mrs Faisal lacks at the moment.

Strong competition over female votes is also coming from Communist Party candidate, Mrs Emily Nafa, a prominent activist who is running for the Christian seat in the same district. Mrs Nafa exploited the anger of the feminist independent groups against Ms Faisal since the latter was an opponent of a proposal to allocate a women's quota in the Lower House. Ms Faisal considers herself as a "female politician" rather than a "feminist activist", a position that did not please the majority of women activists who believe that a women quota should be placed high on the agenda of female candidates. Mrs Nafa supports the women quota.

In addition to this, both contenders have to deal with a third woman candidate running for the Third District's Christian seat. Mrs Norma Shatara is another woman activist.

In the First District, writer Ayshah Al Khawaja is competing for one of the three Muslim seats. She is member of the

center-right National Constitutional Party (NCP), but is running on an independent ticket. Since she is the only female candidate in that district, Al Khawaja has to compete with 20 male candidates, two of them are independent Islamic figures while most of the rest are tribal figures. Mrs Khawaja's fortunes depend on indirect NCP backing, but this would not help very much because in the First District independent Islamists and tribal figures have almost divided the cake.

Mrs Fatmeh Hassaneh, member of the Jordanian National Forum For Women (JNFW), is running in the Fourth District in Amman for one of the only two Muslim seats on offer. She is competing with 14 men, most of them enjoy strong tribal support.

In the tribally dominated Fifth district, the chances of female candidates are more critical and confusing.

since three women are competing against 36 men. Mrs Fardous Al Masri, a journalist who does not belong to any of the five big tribes, is running for one of the four Muslim seats. Al Masri is member of the JNFW, whose hopes of winning depends on votes from independent Muslims and feminists. She is joined by Mrs Hiam Kallam and Mrs Laila Faisal of the JNFW, both are competing for the single Circassian/Chechen seat in the Fifth District and both also are competing with other four men for the same seat.

In other districts, women are also having a tough race. In Irbid, Mrs Fatmeh Obeidat, Muslim member of the JNFW is competing with 61 candidates for one of the eight Muslim seats. And in Ramtha and Banat Kinaneh, Samira Al Tai is competing with 18 candidates for one of the three Muslim seats.

In the Zarqa district, Mrs Sabah Al Anadi is contesting one of the four Muslim seats along with 40 male candidates.

## JORDANIAN PAPERS

By Marwan Al Asmar  
NCP blues on the eve of poll

DOES THE resignation of Jamal Al Shaer from the National Constitutional Party, just few days before the 4 November elections, pose a problem for the NCP, political pundits are asking? You might be surprised to hear that the answer could be in the negative. After all, one more resignation doesn't make much difference and party members resign all the time. No single party in Jordan for instance, has run smoothly since its formation. Whether on the right, left or center they all had to face the pressures of resignations, splits and breakaways.

But the problem with this resignation is that it comes at a time when the election campaign is in full swing. The extent of the damage of Shaer's resignation from the Higher Guidance Committee of the party will only be known once the results are made public.

But the NCP is putting on a brave face, still aiming to be the party of the future, having pushed aside resignations by top and middle-ranking party members. Ideologically labeled as right of center, today, the NCP is fielding 11 candidates in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Ma'an, Tafleh, mid-Bedouin district and Aqaba.

Further to this, party officials are saying that the party has a lot more candidates running under "secret" or "tribal" lists. Few weeks before the start of the campaign, party members were saying that they would be fielding a total number of 43 candidates, but now everybody is keeping their lips sealed. But again the reason for this could be electoral tactics, dreamt up by party strategists designed to increase votes for their candidates. This is especially true in areas where the tribal vote is dominant.

However, the NCP, which has been formed last May out of a collection of medium and small size parties will really have to pull its socks up if it is to have an impact either on the forthcoming elections or in the aftermath.

The resignation of Mr Shaer, a respected politician, came in the wake of the departure of Akel Al Fozay as head of the Guidance Committee. He plainly said that his resignation comes about because of the way that the party conducts its business and the monopoly of the few over the many.

Last August, the party experienced another tumultuous because of resignations from its rank and file across the country. Although this is not the time or the place to indulge in recriminations, the leadership of the NCP must, in the final analysis, examine the direction of the party, and why the constant stream of resignations, which started more or less from the beginning and have continued throughout.

No doubt that with members like Abdel Hadi Al Majalli and Abdel Raouf Al Rawabdi, Jamal Al Khreish, the party's electoral fortunes are well spirited, but it remains to be seen, how much of an impact this party will have on the political system in this country. ■

In Kerak, two women candidates, Mrs Siham Bayaidah and Mrs Hafeetha Ma'atiah, join 49 candidates for one of the seven Muslim seats.

In Aqaba, Mrs Da'd Al Tamimi, the NCP candidate there, is competing with nine candidates for the district's two seats.

And in Balqa district, Mrs Ajayeb Heleires hopes to win one of the two Muslim seats, but she has 39 male candidates to think of.

In the Ajloun District, Nawal Al Momani is competing with 39 candidates for one of the two Muslim seats there.

And in the Mid-Bedouin District, Mrs Wisaf Ka'abneh, who was shot at only two days ago, is competing against 20 male candidates for one of the two Muslim seats in that closed district. ■

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# ARAB BANK GROUP

## Balance Sheet as of 30 June 1997 and 1996

| Assets  | 1997<br>USD ('000) | 1996<br>USD ('000) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Cash and due from banks   | 5,882,535          | 5,640,200          |
| Government and trading securities   | 953,624            | 1,326,583          |
| Loans and advances, net   | 7,087,599          | 6,309,604          |
| Long-term investments, net  | 1,523,818          | 1,118,545          |
| Fixed assets, net   | 108,950            | 96,129             |
| Other assets  | 359,591            | 350,479            |
| <b>Total Assets</b>   | <b>15,916,117</b>  | <b>14,841,540</b>  |
| Customers' liability on guarantees, letters of credit and other contingencies | 5,203,701          | 5,919,950          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>21,119,818</b>  | <b>20,761,490</b>  |

Net profit for the period ended 30 June 1997 and 30 June 1996 was included in "Other Liabilities"

### Main branches in the Arab countries

| Branch                | Country (No. of branches) | P.O.Box | Telephone | Facsimile |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Shmeisani, Amman      | Jordan (85)               | 950546  | 607231    | 670564    |
| King Faisal St. Amman |                           | 68      | 638161    | 637082    |
| Ramallah              | West Bank (9)             | 1487    | 9954822   | 9954824   |
| Gaza                  | Gaza Strip (3)            | 91      | 866288    | 820704    |
| Manama O.B.U.         | Bahrain (1)               | 813     | 212255    | 224475    |
| Manama                | Bahrain (3)               | 395     | 229988    | 210443    |
| Cairo                 | Egypt (6)                 | 2006    | 5746218   | 5746165   |
| Beirut                | Lebanon (10)              | 11-1015 | 980430    | 980803    |
| Doha                  | Qatar (2)                 | 172     | 437979    | 410774    |
| Abu Dhabi             | U.A.E. (8)                | 875     | 274111    | 272433    |
| Dubai                 |                           | 11364   | 228845    | 285974    |
| Sana'a                | Yemen (7)                 | 475     | 276584    | 276583    |

### Main branches in Europe, Asia and U.S.A.

| Branch    | Country (No. of branches) | P.O.Box | Telephone | Facsimile |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Nicosia   | Cyprus (4)                | 5650    | 457111    | 367741    |
| Paris     | France (2)                | 319     | 45616000  | 42890978  |
| Athens    | Greece (1)                | 30357   | 3255401   | 3255519   |
| Rome      | Italy (1)                 | 745     | 69940479  | 6795601   |
| Madrid    | Spain (3)                 |         | 3084290   | 3086482   |
| London    | U.K. (3)                  | 138     | 3158500   | 6007620   |
| Singapore | Singapore (1)             |         | 5330055   | 5322150   |
| Seoul     | S. Korea (1)              | 1331    | 3179000   | 7570124   |
| New York  | U.S.A. (1)                |         | 7159700   | 5934632   |

### Sister, Subsidiary and Associated Companies

| Arab Bank                                     | Percentage of Ownership |
|---|-------------------------|
| Arab Bank (Switzerland) Ltd. - Zurich, Geneva | 100%                    |
| Arab Bank Australia Ltd. - Sydney             | 100%                    |
| Arab Bank (Austria) AG - Vienna               | 100%                    |
| Arab Bank AG - Frankfurt / Germany            | 100%                    |
| Finance, Accountancy, Mohassaba S.A. - Geneva | 100%                    |
| Islamic International Arab Bank - Amman       | 100%                    |
| Arab Tunisian Bank - Tunis                    | 64%                     |
| Arab Palestinian Investment Bank - Ramallah   | 55%                     |
| Arab Bank Maroc - Morocco                     | 50%                     |
| Oman Arab Bank - Oman                         | 49%                     |
| Arab National Bank - Saudi Arabia             | 40%                     |
| Arabia Insurance Co., Lebanon                 | 37%                     |
| Commercial Building Co., Lebanon              | 30%                     |

| Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity                  | 1997<br>USD ('000) | 1996<br>USD ('000) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Customer deposits                                     | 10,571,772         | 9,716,922          |
| Bank deposits   | 3,004,504          | 3,014,576          |
| Other liabilities                                     | 953,143            | 868,951            |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>                              | <b>14,529,419</b>  | <b>13,600,449</b>  |
| Capital   | 84,897             | 84,897             |
| Statutory reserve                                     | 78,766             | 78,181             |
| Voluntary reserve                                     | 218,836            | 179,230            |
| General reserve                                       | 738,626            | 641,782            |
| Reserves with associated companies                    | 310,944            | 273,823            |
| Retained earnings                                     | 483                | 2,031              |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,432,552</b>   | <b>1,259,944</b>   |
| Translation adjustments                               | (45,854)           | (18,853)           |
| <b>Total Shareholders' Equity</b>                     | <b>1,386,698</b>   | <b>1,241,091</b>   |
| <b>Total Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity</b>     | <b>15,916,117</b>  | <b>14,841,540</b>  |
| Guarantees, letters of credit and other contingencies | 5,203,701          | 5,919,950          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>21,119,818</b>  | <b>20,761,490</b>  |

JOD 1 = USD 1.41 on 30/06/1997

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| Income Statement for the period ended 30 June 1997 and 1996 | 1997<br>USD ('000) | 1996<br>USD ('000) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Net interest and commission                                 | 230,997            | 218,154            |
| Plus: Foreign exchange trading                              | 14,841             | 12,201             |
| Other income  | 16,803             | 13,426             |
|   | <b>262,641</b>     | <b>243,781</b>     |
| Less: General and administrative expenses                   | 127,470            | 120,875            |
| Net income before tax                                       | 135,171            | 122,906            |
| Income tax  | 26,606             | 27,340             |
| <b>Net income</b>   | <b>108,565</b>     | <b>95,566</b>      |

### Sister, Subsidiary and associated companies

|                                      | Country    | P.O.Box | Telephone | Facsimile |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Arab Bank (Switzerland) Ltd.         | Zurich     | 5281    | 2657111   | 2657330   |
|                                      | Geneva     | 1096    | 7151211   | 7322460   |
| Arab Bank Australia Ltd.             | Sydney     | N-645   | 93778900  | 92215428  |
| Arab Bank (Austria) AG               | Vienna     | 100     | 5134240   | 51342409  |
| Arab Bank AG                         | Frankfurt  | 100127  | 242590    | 235471    |
| Finance, Accountancy, Mohassaba S.A. | Geneva     | 1506    | 9083000   | 7387229   |
| Arab Tunisian Bank                   | Tunis      | 520     | 349736    | 349278    |
| Oman Arab Bank S.A.O.                | Ruwi       | 2010    | 706265    | 797736    |
| Arab Bank Maroc                      | Casablanca | 13810   | 223152    | 200233    |
| Arab National Bank                   | Riyadh     | 56921   | 4029000   | 4027747   |
| Arabia Insurance Co.                 | Beirut     | 11-2172 | 363610    | 365139    |
| Arab Palestinian Investment Bank     | Ramallah   | 1268    | 9987126   | 9987125   |

|                        |                  |       |               |              |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Representative offices | Beijing (Peking) | China | Tel. 65182858 | Fax 65182358 |
|                        | Shanghai         | China | Tel. 65077737 | Fax 65072776 |
|                        | Santiago         | Chile | Tel. 2342608  | Fax 2344745  |

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Lurie's NewsCartoon



## Our Say...

## Dangerous prospects ahead

US SPECIAL envoy to the Middle East, Mr Dennis Ross, speaks of encouraging signs after arranging meetings between Palestinian and Israeli officials this week. But no sooner had he made his statements to the press, officials from both sides gave a gloomy picture of how things really are in the stalled negotiations.

The grim face of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat during his meeting with Israel's Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai two days ago, revealed much of the despair and frustration that is now the main feature of the peace process.

There is evidently a widening gap between the two parties, made even wider by the intransigent attitude of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The ongoing deadlock continues because the Israeli premier has no intention of honoring the accords signed with the Palestinians. His feeble excuses have even embarrassed members of his cabinet such as Foreign Minister David Levy.

The Americans, as sponsors of the peace process, know that with Netanyahu in charge, the peace process will not be going anywhere, in fact as Palestinian frustration mounts and inaction worsens conditions in the West Bank and Gaza, the only result that we can expect is a total collapse of the peace process.

With US attempts to bring Arafat and Netanyahu together looking remote, we are assured everyday that the Israeli leadership has lost the political will to negotiate in good faith and honor the principles of the accords that were signed.

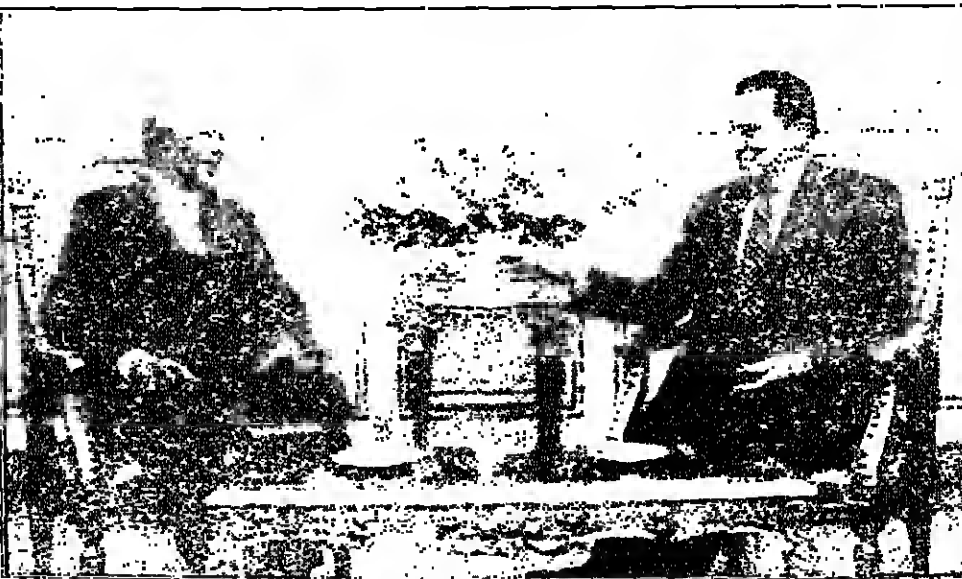
Netanyahu's policies of fattening and building settlements and ignoring Palestinian demands under the accords prove beyond doubt that we have reached the end of the peace process under the present Israeli government.

This growing reality leaves us with the nauseating feeling that we are about to witness a steady deterioration in regional stability in the coming weeks and months. The United States, it seems, has lost interest in salvaging the process and is unwilling to extract any "concessions" from Israel at this stage.

The alternatives for the Palestinians are indeed becoming stark everyday. With the release of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his return to Gaza, the rise of Hamas as a substitute to Arafat's weakening authority can only be attributed to Netanyahu's deliberate policies of embarrassing the Palestinian National Authority. With this in mind, we can entertain the Israeli prospect of pre-empting the legitimacy of the PNA and its structure so as to create a dangerous void inside the Palestinian territories.

That is a calculated risk, but the odds are not so good even for the Israelis. If they lose Arafat as their negotiating partner, they would also succumb to a more radical successor, whether Hamas or some other embryonic movement that could emerge.

Playing one side against the other, as Netanyahu is doing now, is a dangerous game for all involved including the Israelis. The US must move beyond the current stalemate and take steps to preserve what has been achieved so far. US apathy will only lead to things getting out of hand in the short run. When this happens it will be impossible, and too late, to contain the damage.



South African President, Nelson Mandela is received in Cairo by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Monday. Later on he travelled to Libya, a move which angered the United States. Mr Mandela says he has a moral obligation to travel to Libya because of the support that it gives in the African National Congress during its fight to dismantle the apartheid regime in his country. Mr Mandela has also called for an end to the UN-imposed sanctions on Libya.

## The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Media Services International (Info-Media).  
Editorial & Advertising: Telephones 652-380, 645-380, Fax 649-298,  
P.O. Box 9313, Postal Code 11191 Amman - Jordan, email: Star@arabia.com  
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The Star is serviced by LA Times-Washington Post News Service, Cartoons International (Lurie cartoons), PANOS, The WorldPaper, Editors Press Service, STILLS and by correspondents in the United States and South Asia.

Member of The International Advertising Association

Subscriptions: (annual) Jordan JD 20, Arab countries US\$ 100, W. Europe US\$ 200, USA & Canada US\$ 300.

Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

## A letter from the Levant

## Lackluster campaign in Jordan's elections

By Osama El-Sherif

JORDAN IS in election mode in preparation for the 4 November poll that will decide the make-up of the 13th Parliament. But unlike the elections of 1989 and 1993, campaigning among the 600 plus candidates vying for a place in the 80-seat Lower House is low key and voters are yet to show signs of real involvement.

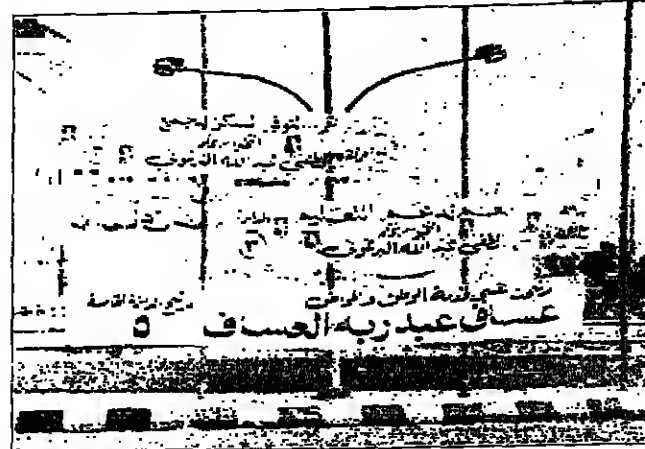
Aside from the ubiquitous banners festooning the streets of every city, town and hamlet, this is very much a one-sided election. The controversial issue in these elections is the process itself. With the mainstream Islamist party and other opposition parties and prominent figures adhering to their boycott decision, it is still unclear how voters will be responding on 4 November.

And this is a timid campaign as well. It is a far cry from the fiery slogans of the previous campaigns which focused on peace with Israel, the liberation of Palestine and the Islamic panacea to national woes. Instead, the candidates are avoiding sensitive issues and talking in general terms about national unity, job security, education and medical insurance among others. They are being described as municipal rather than national elections. It's a lackluster campaign and an apathetic

public is not taking these slogans seriously. Many of the candidates are unknown to the public, probably encouraged to try their luck since the more powerful candidates are staying home.

Democracy and public liberties were the main issues back in 1989, peace with Israel and fighting normalization with the Jewish state underlined the 1993 poll, when legalized political parties first entered the fray. This year the issues are as vague as the candidates. But one thing sets these elections from their predecessors: the tribal element which now dominates the candidates.

The tribal influence was always there, but it was suppressed by the elections' law that gave voters more than one vote according to their constituencies. That law was changed unilaterally by the government just before the 1993 elections. As unpopular as it was among the political parties, the single vote system was implemented in the previous elections. The Islamists and small political parties believed they were the main target of the single vote system, charging that it nurtured tribalism in a society that was claiming to be democratic and civil. Their protesters could not prevent the former Lower House from approving the single vote system, just as they failed to derail the Jordanian



Israel peace treaty law.

A series of unpopular decisions by the previous government, especially the lifting of bread subsidies, and by the current government, such as the new press law, have added to the opposition's suspicions that democratic reforms and gains were being reversed. This led to the Islamists' decision to boycott the 4 November elections. They were soon joined by other opposition parties and independent Jordanian figures that included former prime ministers and senior government officials.

But the government was not about to change its course and went ahead with preparations for the elections, which now seem to decide the fate of the

democratic process in the Kingdom.

The boycott decision has created rifts among the Islamists mainstream: the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm the Islamic Action Front. Once the largest opposition bloc under the dome, the coming Lower House will have no IAF members although some leading Islamists have broken ranks with their movement and are contesting the election as independents.

Whatever the shape and color of the next Jordanian Parliament, Jordanian democracy and political pluralism will never be the same. The democratic transition is at a crossroads and a thriving experiment may have reached the limits.

## The two sides of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin

By Nicholas Goldberg

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Greeting supporters in a dusty hall field near his home, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin is greeted by a beaming, his eyebrows bushy, his expression placid, his hands limp in his lap.

Perched clumsily in his wheelchair, his head covered with a white veil representing purity, he couldn't seem more harmless. Few things look less dangerous than a crippled old man with a calm smile, a respectful manner and a leaky eye that needs to be wiped every few minutes.

"He's a saint," says a boy who has been waiting several hours to meet him.

But there is another side to Yassin as well. He is the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, which the United States last week again declared one of the world's most dangerous terrorist organizations.

Although he describes himself as a Palestinian who "just wants his house back," and although his withered hands clearly can't build bombs, the ailing, 61-year-old sheikh is responsible, as surely as if he'd done it himself, for the deaths of hundreds of civilians caught in his battle to remove Israel from Palestinian land.

"Only when the occupation is over will we have achieved our goal of liberating the homeland," he said in an interview last week. "Until then, the armed attacks will continue."

The sheikh was released from an Israeli prison suddenly two weeks ago after serving eight years of a life sentence for ordering the murder of Israelis. His surprise release—intended to make amends for a bungled effort by the Mossad secret service to assassinate another top Hamas leader a week earlier—has given a tremendous popular boost to Hamas, by all accounts.

But just who Yassin is a question that is perplexing the region. It remains unclear whether he is a moderate leader who will help bring his militant Islamic movement into the mainstream or an unconstructed radical whose commitment to violence is unwavering. Put another way, the question is whether Hamas, which has claimed responsibility for most of the terror bombings of the past two years, can be crushed or co-opted, or whether it will remain a bloody obstacle to peace.

Although much of the West views Hamas as an organization on the fringe of society, here in Gaza, another vision prevails. Here, Hamas is an integral part of the community, adhering to the Islamic values that many Palestinians share and providing a broad array of social services for the overcrowded refugee



his feet. He submits with the same serenity he has shown all day.

Then, they carry his wheelchair down from the stage and bring him into the milling masses, where he prays with the rest. His willingness to be part of the crowd is part of what has won him—and Hamas—the loyalty of the people.

It was only a decade ago that Yassin founded Hamas, at the start of the "intifada," the popular uprising against Israel. He had long been a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, but decided it was time to create an Islamic organization to take action against Israel and challenge the secular Palestine Liberation Organization under Yasser Arafat. The name "Hamas," which means "zeal" in Arabic, is an acronym for "Islamic Resistance Movement."

Ironically, Hamas received a measure of Israeli support and covert financial aid in its early days.

"Israel turned a blind eye to Hamas, because they hoped that if it grew in social influence, it would pose a challenge to the secularists in the PLO," said Ziad Abu-Amr, author of a book on Islamic fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories. "They came to regret that later."

By the end of the intifada, Hamas had emerged as one of the most radical movements around. Quickly, its leadership was jailed and scattered. Yassin was arrested in 1987—for killing Israelis and illegal weapons possession—and remained in Israeli prisons until last month.

Other leaders have scattered, such as Imad El Alami, a top Hamas leader from a prominent Jerusalem family who is now in Damascus, Syria; Musa Abu-Marzuq, who was in the United States until being deported earlier this year; and Khaled Mish'al, who heads the political bureau from Amman.

The political leaders of Hamas insist they have no connection with the military wing. Although they applaud the bombings, they say they do not give the orders. But Israeli security sources say they are lying.

Yassin's return to Gaza poses difficulties for Arafat. On the one hand, Arafat is under tremendous pressure from Israel and the United States to crack down on Hamas and to arrest its activists. At the same time he is keenly aware of how popular Hamas is, and is loath to crush it at the behest of his old enemy, Israel.

"We are against violence and crime, but we're not against Hamas as a political movement," said Nasser Youssef, Arafat's security chief. "As a political movement, they are our sons."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Middle East Beat

by Khairi Janbati

## Guaranteed crisis; Water

THE RECENT Earth Summit in New York discussed many issues relevant to the current circumstances of our world, made projections of the future, and the precarious outlook that awaits humanity. There were many subjects, some seemingly esoteric in nature, while others requiring global solutions that polarized the delegates into opposite stands, and making proposals unworkable.

But apart from the diminishing ozone layer threatening everyone, and if I dare say, is still an incomprehensible topic, to the majority, the water situation in the world has set alarm bells ringing. This is especially when one considers that experts have it that, mainly third world countries will be suffering from water shortages—countries with shared river-beds, and common river frontiers will be heading for guaranteed conflict: over water resources within the next 30 years.

Again, the wretched of the earth, who were spared the calamities of the 20th century, mother nature, seem to insist on catching up with its uncounted horseman of the apocalypse. Thirst, Time is evidently running out, and dealing with the water crisis on an international level is becoming an absolute necessity.

One turns to the continuing warnings of HRH, Crown Prince Hassan, regarding this lurking possibility of disaster of water shortage, and its definite consequences for war and destruction. As statesman, the Crown Prince's support to the pronouncements and warnings of the international scientific community, must add political clout to the theorists, and bring about all concerned parties, mainly in our area, to discuss openly the impending danger that threatens our mutual interest, in the most practicable manner.

This delicate and important subject, which no one can sweep under the carpet, anymore, cannot be approached in a zero-sum manner, for the result will be a big zero for all of us in the end. Even for those parties who still think that wars bring about winners and losers and who are still to experience it yet, there are no winners in war.

There is no other natural source that can replace water, and a thirsty person does not resemble the one without fuel oil. So, instead of having the world powers busy, trying to fend the dangers to the oil fields, and worry about the security of oil outflow, it is time to attract their attention to the possible future conflagration as a result of thirst, which will engulf their interests, as well as our physical existence, surpassing in brutality anything that can be anticipated by the guardians of energy. If there is no true international will to incorporate water resources as part of international human security, then we have to move fast on our regional level, and start drawing implementation plans that can be beneficial to all of us.

Obviously, the obstacles are still there, and we cannot pretend that it will be easy, but what is certain is that, our current mode of thinking on a regional level stuck to the notions of security, borders, and being, is not suitable for what we will be facing individually at the beginning of the next century. No scoundrel then, will be able to hide behind patriotism, nor behind a flag. For survival is a joint effort that requires all our collective efforts and goodwill. Otherwise, all that we can look forward to is more death and destruction, that would fit us truly into the neo-Malthusian formula, of surplus nations. We must elevate ourselves beyond the mundane and obvious, and start developing a vision for our future existence.

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TUE



23 OCTOBER 1997

J O R D A N

THE STAR 5

## JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional  
report on Jordanian  
news and views edited  
by Marwan Al Asmar

Vote for my husband,  
he's for women's lib!



## Elections' shot

Female candidate for the Mid-Bedouin constituency, Wisaf Ka'abneh, was shot at and her driver was injured in what appeared to be a deliberate attempt on her life. The incident took place in the town of Jizah south of Amman. Mrs Ka'abneh, who is a lawyer, is the only female candidate standing for the Mid-Bedouin constituency among the 20 male candidates.

While Ka'abneh wouldn't point fingers she says the conservative tribal community doesn't want her to stand for elections, but said she is determined, come what may. The constituency has several clans from the Bani Sakher tribe. The two assailants have been caught by the police.



Ka'abneh

## More honor killings

A total of 19 women were killed this year alone in the name of honor. By the end of '97, the number is likely to increase even further. Honor killings—the shooting or knifing of women by their next of kin or relatives because of alleged adultery—is not a peculiarly Jordanian phenomenon, yet the number of victims seems to rise every year. It would be a wild understatement to say that honor killings have got to stop, of course they have to. But the only way this can be done is to tighten the law, so that those who take the law into their own hands know that they will pay dearly.

## Christian teachings

The government had long said it's going to do it. Now it is on the threshold. Christianity as a subject will be taught in public schools throughout the country as of next month. Officials at the Ministry of Education say that initially this will be an experimental step, introduced in public schools where a good percentage of pupils belong to the Christian faith. The teaching is to take place every Thursday when schools are off.

## Party politics

It seems that political parties are not going to get away with it at last. Interior Minister Nahir Rashid is already preparing a new law for political parties which the government will present to the 13th Parliament. The minister says that the new law, which is still under study, seeks to tighten the loopholes in the old law. The articles that relate to the minimum number of people who may form a party, and finance have proved very contentious in the past and are likely to be changed.

## AIDS on the increase

The numbers of people with the AIDS virus has increased by 12 cases to 164 in this country. Sources at the Health Ministry say that the figure has been steadily going down as 42 victims have died since the AIDS problem was discovered in Jordan in 1986. There are 105 carriers of the AIDS virus in Jordan.

## Jordan-Israel relations

News reports from Israel are suggesting that relations between Jordan and Israel could be on the mend again. Relations were strained after the bungled Mossad operation on Khalid Misha'l last month. Jordan's ambassador to Israel, Mr Omar Al Rifai, met with the Director-General in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Elian Bensur last week. According to the Jerusalem Post, Mr Rifai said he received numerous expressions of support from rank and file Israelis who expressed admiration for His Majesty King Hussein and the people of Jordan. Also last week the newspaper reported that the Israeli army hosted Jordanian military officers. A group of Jordanian commanders had spent two days in Israel last week discussing "topics of mutual interest and the continuation of military cooperation between the Israeli and Jordanian armies," an Israeli army source said. On another level, Israeli extremists surrounded the homes of two Jordanian Embassy employees in Tel Aviv for four hours. Sources say that the protesters threw stones at the windows and shouted anti-Jordanian slogans. Foreign Minister Fayez Al Tarawneh is trying to playdown the incident, saying the Ambassador Rifai submitted a complaint of the incident to the concerned Israeli authorities.

## Iraqis in Jordan

More than 18,000 Iraqis are living in Jordan, according to Iraq's latest national census. According to the Iraqi Embassy in Amman 18,764 registered in the latest count. However independent estimates suggest that the figure could reach as high as 100,000.

## Released!

An Irbid man was arrested early this week for what the authorities called as inciting people in that city to boycott the coming elections. Shehadeh Abu Sharif was later released from custody upon the direct instructions of the Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid.

# Our path is clear, armed resistance until occupation is ousted

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Hamas' political leader Khalid Misha'l says that his organization will maintain its confrontational stance towards Israel as long as its occupation of Palestinian territories continues. In the wake of the botched attempt on his life by Mossad agents in Amman late September, he remains unrepentant saying that Israel must quit its occupation or else remain under threat from Hamas. Misha'l, born in Silwad near Ramallah in 1956 and the father of eight, was one of the founders of the organization in 1987. In 1967 he left for Kuwait and later on obtained a degree in Physics from Kuwait University. During this time, he continued to espouse the Islamic trend in Palestinian politics. After the last Gulf War, he came back to Jordan, and in 1996 headed Hamas's top political job that of a politburo chief. He talked to *The Star's* Raed Al Abed. Excerpts follow:

After the incident, where does Hamas place itself in the equation of the Middle East political process?

Hamas is not part of the settlement map. We believe in resistance as the only choice to regain our people's rights and to force the Zionist enemy to surrender, particularly in the light of the failure of all peace agreements and efforts to help our people to achieve their legitimate rights or in forcing the occupation to submit to these rights. Hamas constitutes an effective power center in the Palestinian formula, participating in drawing the present and the future of the Palestinian cause.

We believe that Hamas is in a more powerful position to impose change in the Zionist's stand, more so than political and diplomatic efforts, because the Zionist mentality does not submit to diplomacy but to the logic of force.

Some analysts argue that whether Hamas likes it or not, it is already part of the Middle East political process, adding that Hamas must invest in the failed Mossad attempt and the world's criticism of Israel. How do you respond?

Any movement that respects itself and trusts its strength makes it impossible for anybody to dominate its decision. No party in the world can affect our resistance. If the experience of the PLO gives the impression that pressure forces parties to submit or change, this does not apply to Hamas.

Hamas is a comprehensive movement, it's involved in social, cultural and political work, but with the continued occupation of our land—armed resistance has become the only choice to force the enemy out. The military option goes together with political and other activities. For those Arab or international parties who want Hamas to change and become only involved in political negotiations, I would ask these parties if they can bring back Palestinian rights? Could America, Europe and the international community liberate our people and build our independent state, and help the five million Palestinians to return to their homeland?

The past years proved that neither the US nor the world community can do anything for our cause. On the contrary, the US is backing the occupation against the innocent Palestinians. We love peace and justice but not at the expense of our legitimate rights.

Our path is clear: armed resistance until the occupation is ousted. No one in the world can change this strategy. The coming days will prove that Hamas remains steadfast on its path.

Taking into consideration Hamas's good relations with Jordan and its policy to avoid inter-Palestinian fighting, don't you find yourselves in an awkward position?

I do not think it is unnatural, or that our presence in Jordan is rejected, because our battle is only against the occupation. Accordingly, the political differences between Hamas and the Arab parties involved in the peace process do not mean a conflict with them. Our presence is welcomed because it does not generate any burden. On the contrary, some decision makers in the region, consider Hamas as the hope and the "cushion" of the Arab nation against Zionist stubbornness.



Misha'l

Analysts say that the reason why the Jordanian government allows Hamas to maintain a presence in this country is to do with political factors. Hamas is the Jordanian influence in Palestine to face the PLO's Fatah-dominated influence in Jordan. How far do your relations with Jordan satisfy this equation?

Hamas is not a tool in the hands of anybody. It does not ally itself with one Arab party against the other, nor even against the Palestinian Authority. The Hamas movement has always put the interests of the Palestinian people on top of its agenda. However, Hamas enjoys good political relations with Jordan and other Arab and Islamic states, but these relations are balanced.

We, in Hamas, do not cause problems to anyone, our presence is not a burden. There is no contradiction in interests between Arabs and Muslims. I believe that talking about contradictions among us serves the

program of the Zionists. We differ politically with the Palestinian Authority, we also differ with a number of Arab countries regarding the peace settlement, but it does not mean that our interests are different.

Hamas is not aiming to compete with any party, we don't seek to bypass any party, our battle is against the Zionist occupation.

But there are political contradictions between Hamas on the one hand and Jordan and the Palestinian Authority on the other. How are you dealing with this situation?

"We do not deny that there are clear divisions in political stands, we are against Oslo, we are against any compromise with the enemy, but this does not mean a contradiction in the interests of the Umma. We believe that the interests of our people and our nation are one.

We have succeeded in strengthening relations with the Arab and Islamic states, because Hamas does not inter-

fere in the internal affairs of any country. Hamas does not form a threat to the security of Jordan or any other country, because the security and stability of Jordan and any of the Arab countries is our security and our stability. This credibility of Hamas gave the movement all the respect and trust of the Arab countries.

What about the step-by-step liberation of Palestine approach, which Hamas has adopted? How are you going to satisfy this strategy?

Hamas believes it is logical to achieve the liberation of Palestine in a step-by-step process which goes in line with observing the international balance of power in every stage. But this does not mean abandoning any inch of Palestine.

How does this piecemeal approach differ from the Oslo agreements? Don't you think that Oslo serves as a step towards liberation?

No, it does not. What is being done by the PLO is accepting a very limited part of Palestine and surrendering the rest of our rights. On top of that, the PLO gave legitimacy to the Zionist entity—this we believe was a compromise, taking a small part and surrendering all. Hamas believes that liberating a part is a step towards total liberation.

Some describe Hamas as the Middle East model of the Irish Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army. Do you agree?

Yes, we learn from the experiences of other nations. As a result of the enormous pressure we faced, Hamas has completely separated its political wing from the military one. The political wing has no relation with the military activities, although we are proud of the resistance activities inside Palestine.

But what are the basis on which your military wing operates, since you do not control it?

There is a strategy which has drawn the political and military policies, this strategy is adopted by the movement, which all Hamas members are obliged to follow.

## Press cocktail

Edited by Raed Al Abed

## A message to the Palestinian people

Dr Haidar Abdel Shafi is a prominent Palestinian politician who headed the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference in October 1991. He proved to be a tough defender of Palestinian rights during negotiations with the Israelis, as he lived the suffering of his people, since the old physician was a communist activist in the Gaza Strip.

However, and all of a sudden Abdel Shafi and his strong team that included Faisal Al Hussieni and Hammad Ashrawi were ousted. Another team secretly finished negotiating the peace agreement with Israel in Oslo, the Norwegian capital.

Abdel Shafi became a critical opponent of Oslo I and II accords, saying that they had failed to provide for the acceptable minimum to guarantee Palestinian rights. The man was fighting for the maximum, he was fully armed with the spirit of the Palestinian national uprising, but the Oslo agreements let him down badly.

However, he refused to leave the ground for the Oslo team. Abdel Shafi participated in the legislative elections held early 1995, and won a seat in the Palestinian Legislative Council under a reform program. He strongly fought for improving the conditions of negotiations with Israel and worked hard against marginalizing the legislative council by the executive branch of the Palestinian National Authority, and strongly supported the separation of power. But, he failed.

Abdel Shafi had no other choice but to resign from the legislative Council recently. In his resignation statement published by *Al Quds* Arabic daily in Jerusalem, Abdel Shafi said the Executive turned its back on the need for "constitutional cooperation and coordination," with the council. He added that the PNA defied the Council's initiative to adopt a law to organize relations between the different institutions of the Palestine National Authority (PNA). He said that such a law is evidence of the unconstitutional practices of the Executive branch which ignores the decisions and recommendations of the Council, which had negatively affected the performance of the council's members.

He added that the most important priority of our people is guaranteeing their basic needs, and to uproot corruption and nepotism. In addition, he added the people want law and human rights to be respected, and that means working for democracy.

In his statement, Abdel Shafi criticized the Palestinian leadership because it insisted on continuing negotiations despite the non-stop Israeli violations to the substantial issues of the peace process.

He maintained that despite the fact that it is Israeli practices which are the reasons behind the credibility loss in the peace process, Israel continues to accuse the Islamists of being the reason for stopping negotiations, adding that Israel continues to pressure the PNA to even more repression against Islamists. He added that despite his dissatisfaction with the suicide operations, "I do not find any reason or an excuse for the PNA to close down social institutions which serve people, just because they belong to Hamas."

He stressed that the PNA must adopt seven crucial principles. These focus on the need to forge a unified Palestinian stand to face the great challenges and stop the repeated Israeli threats of invading Palestinian territories. He also stressed the necessity of the separation of powers between the three branches of the Palestinian National Authority.

He ended by sending a message to the Palestinians, saying that "it is a message to the voters, who gave us their trust, to know the truth," adding that voters must know that the legislative council is not capable of shouldering its political and social responsibilities.

In his resignation letter submitted to Mr Ala' Abu Qurei, head of the Palestine Legislative Council, Abdel Shafi hopes that his action will bring about reform, something that was greatly hindered.



Abdel Shafi

## The Science and Technology Club of Amman fosters Jordanian talent

By Ilham Sadeq  
Star Staff Writer

AT LAST our inventors are given a hearing. Since 1988, the Science and Technology Club sought financial and moral support for a wide range of Jordanian creative talents.

As we move rapidly to the second millennium, people have come to realize the importance of scientific creativity. Innovations should be greatly encouraged, which is the major objective of Club situated in

Shuneh.

"The Science and Technology Club is a national non-governmental, non-profit organization which was first registered at the Ministry of Youth, then transferred to the Ministry of Culture," says Mr Al Abbadi, who has an MSc in Engineering.

The Club strengthens the scientific and technological infrastructure in Jordan by linking inventions to developing applications in the country.

"It is not necessary for an inventor to come up with a new product or device, he might be

reshaping or improving an old tool," Mr Ahmed Abu Ameerah, the Secretary General of the Club tells *The Star*.

The mission of the Club starts from the time the inventor formalizes his idea on paper, comes up with a model that consolidates his theory and then refers it to the concerned authorities for the registration of the patent.

Mr Emad Yared, a volunteer and a member of the Club's Scientific Committee says "We are seeking to sponsor inventors and help talented people,

mainly students, to express their creative abilities and shape them up before they reach their final stage."

"The invention is termed by officials as a 'claim' till it is studied carefully to confirm its feasibility or decide if it is viable to improvement or implementation," Mr Yared, who is an engineer adds.

Sometimes the invention could be an idea, a theory that keeps knocking on the inventors mind.

Mr Esmat Al Hammouri, a mechanic and a garage owner in Irbid speaks about his long quest for technological breakthroughs, saying "The idea behind my invention started seven years ago, it is a device that can be fitted to a car to 'cushion' the impact on pedestrians if they are knocked down."

If such an invention is approved later, it could be an original part of the car when it is manufactured.

But protection is not absolute, its extent depends on the time

and a fixed distance between

the car and the pedestrian.

Al Hammouri went first to the Royal Scientific Society which transferred him to the Ministry of Industry, then sent back to the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

Despite this routine, Al Hammouri did not lose enthusiasm; again he had to go to the Transport Ministry (which said they don't have specialists in such a field) and transferred him to the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Car Accidents that sent him to the Science and Technology Club.

Now, the Club is helping the inventor in the registration process of the device. Al Hammouri is expecting the letters patent shortly.

No further details were disclosed for reasons of property right.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Club organizes annual scientific competitions for creativity.

Among the winners this year were 25 researchers and 25 devices presented by 61 students (male and female). "Subjects focus on water consumption, and environment to energy conservation and others," says Al Abbadi.

An inventor by nature, Al Abbadi is presently researching a new enzyme to ferment milk by a substance taken from an insect.

Ahu Ameerah is also an inventor. He has two letters patents: "devices for extinguishing fires in on-shore and off-shore oil wells." Such devices extinguish fires in a very short time compared with other equipment and minimize environmental pollution on land, sea and air by 90%," he maintains.

He also invented "Water Bounded Oil" device to control oil slicks.

As for funding, the Club depends for its finances on membership fees from two



Al Hammouri

sources: The first from ordinary in the general assembly, who are mostly university graduates and the second from students.

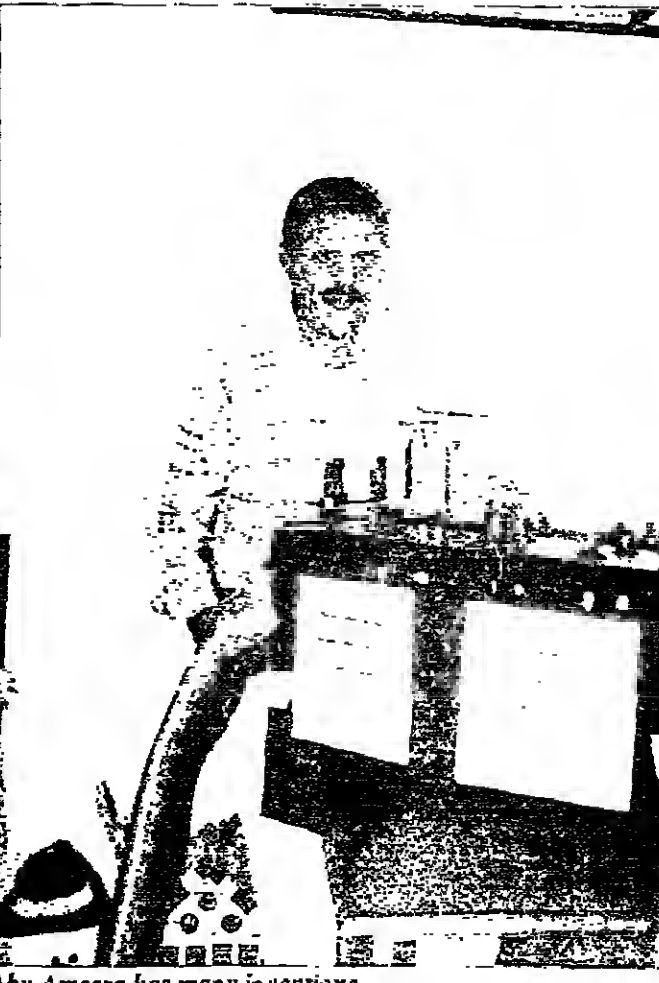
It also receives financial aid from the Ministry of Culture, the Engineers Association, the Higher Council for Science and Technology, the Shoman Foundation and other private donations.

Moreover the Club bridges channels of contacts with schools and have permanent offices in some of them like Al Ittihad Schools in Amman, the Islamic Ittihad Schools in Zerga, the American School, Al Urooba Schools, and the Modern Academic Schools.

It organizes summer camps, offers advanced computer courses for students and arranges for annual competitions.

Now, the Club is completing its new headquarters in Sibhan, Salt, through funding from the Jordan Telecommunication Co. It will be equipped with a research center on solar energy and wind energy, and will have a section for herbs to explore their usage in medical treatment.

Part of the financial support for the project is granted from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Abu Ameerah has many inventions



Business scene

Mr Junnik Lindback, executive vice president of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the largest multilateral source of loan and equity financing for private sector projects in the developing countries, is visiting Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority between 21-24 October 1997. Mr Lindback will be visiting senior officials of the government and the private sector in Jordan. A reception for Mr Lindback will be held by the Jordanian Businessmen Association at the Forte Grand Hotel on Tuesday 21 October for the local businessmen community. Mr Lindback will visit Madaba, Jerash and Petra in a private tour.

Final measures to move on privatizing the Jordan Telecommunication Company (JTC) are underway. Upon recommendation from the High Ministerial Committee specialized in privatization, 41 percent of the JTC's shares will be offered for sale to a "strategic partner." The buyer should be on par with international standards. These recommendations also include giving the JTC a license to construct, manage and operate a network for cellular telephones (mobile) with effect from the beginning of 1998. This will follow the termination of the current mobile service contract granted to Fastlink Co. which ends in 1998.

About 58 Jordanian industrial companies are expected to take part in the Baghdad annual International Show which opens between 1-10 November. A senior official delegation will represent Jordan to the show comprising representatives for the public and private sectors.

Headline the delegation will be Nijm Khreishah, minister of agriculture, Mr Haidar Murad and Khalid Abu Hassan on behalf of the private sector. Jordan's participation in the show will help to hold trade ties between Jordan and Iraq and increase the volume of trade exchange between the two countries.

Foreign Exchange  
Wednesday, 22 October

|           | Buy JD | Sell JD |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| US \$     | 0.7080 | 0.7100  |
| £         | 1.1510 | 1.1568  |
| DM        | 0.4124 | 0.4145  |
| Sfr       | 0.4801 | 0.4825  |
| FRF       | 0.1227 | 0.1233  |
| YEN (100) | 0.5624 | 0.5652  |
| DEU       | 0.3667 | 0.3685  |
| ITL (100) | 0.0419 | 0.0421  |

MARKET WATCH  
18-21 October

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

|                       | SUNDAY   | MONDAY  | TUESDAY   |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| ↑                     | Patla Foods<br>Investment Bank<br>Universal Pharm Industry   | United Engineering<br>Radio Phob<br>Investment Bank             | Mineral Hima<br>Jordan Cement Factory<br>Bryson           |
| ↓                     | Plastic Waring<br>Nayak Doo and Munkh<br>JINCO   | United Engineering<br>Arab Saving Bank<br>Commercial Industries | Jordan Cement Factory<br>Nayak Doo and Munkh<br>Arab Food |
| General Price Point   | 169,800  | 170,140   | 170,540   |
| Trade Volume          | 850,340  | 246,068   | 815,862   |
| Stock Volume          | 723,309  | 121,084   | 194,4025  |
| Highest Traded Stocks | Jordan Phosphate Mine 130000<br>Consent Factory 1362812<br>Jordan Cement Factory 1443419<br>Arab Bank 245550 |   |   |

# \$1 billion worth Jordanian projects to be submitted to Doha summit

AMMAN (Star)—Now that it has become apparent that Jordan is going to attend the coming Doha Summit (MENA IV) which is scheduled on November 16-18, a list of Jordanian investments has been lately disclosed by the Ministry of Planning.

The Jordanian delegation to the summit has the venue has recently been downgraded to a conference (because of the controversy over the covering of the venue), will be headed by the Deputy Prime Minister for Development Dr Jawad Anani. The delegation includes ministers such as Dr Fayez Al Tarawneh (Foreign), Dr Rima Khalaf (Planning), Sulaiman Hafez (Finance), Akel Belaji (Tourism), Ashraf Al Kurdi (Health), amongst others. No delegates from the private sector will be taking part.

The package of developing enterprises are chosen according to national priorities for Jordan's economy. These projects are also well selected to provide attractive incentives for investors from the private sector.

The draft of 25 projects is divided on the basis of three for energy, 12 for industry, six for tourism, two for transport and two for water and treatment of waste water.

Their overall costs are about \$1 billion.

They focus on the comprehensive scheme to transfer Aqaba into a free trade zone over a period of nine years starting from next year. Total cost of the plan is estimated at \$3 billion. The first phase of the project covers 34,000 square kilometers of Aqaba city and will end by mid-1999.

Also on the agenda, is a project for the Jordan Petroleum Refinery expansion in Zarqa at about half a billion dollars. The industrial sector is given a high stake in the list of projects to be discussed at the Doha Summit (12 projects). They include a \$300 million worth enterprise for magnesia products, a \$75.5 million potash nitrate project, calcium phosphate plant and a granite extraction enterprise.

In addition, the projects allocated for oil and gas exploration activities are targeted at exploiting these substances through offering concessions (production sharing concessions) over a period that mounts between 7-8 years, subject for renewal for extra time. This is in addition to the exploration of shale oil which has been lately discovered at promising economic quantities in 17 sites in the country.

The treatment of waste water in Amman and Zarqa governorates is also given much interest as well as other plans for supply of drinking water from Al Disi Basin, which is about 325 kilometers south Amman.

As for the transport sector, projects include building railways to link the shidiyah phosphate mines with Aqaba and constructing an industrial wharf to meet the rise in the movement of freight and passengers from and to Jordan. These projects are to be executed through the participation of the private sector in construction, operation and maintenance of the port's installations. The tourism projects cover plans to develop religious and archaeological sites in Petra, Aqaba, Um Qais and the Dead Sea.

Also on schedule is a project to build an international Center for Conferences and exhibitions at the suburbs of Amman to host national, regional and international shows. Total costs of this project stand at \$150 million.

## French medical event opens in Amman

A TWO-day French Medical Exhibition and Conference will be held at the Royal Cultural Center between 27-28 October.

This venue includes 12 renowned French companies in the medical sector and the seminars presented by French professors revolve around the French health system and medical insurance, the French medical industry, pediatrics, cardiology, medical imaging, MRI, urology, Telemedicine, anesthesia and reanimation, sterilization, disinfection and hygiene. There is also include an exhibition of medical equipment and advanced technologies.

For any further information kindly contact the Commercial Section of the French Embassy in Amman.

The Commercial section of the French Embassy in Amman is constantly working to promote French technologies and equipment through the organization of seminars and exhibitions in Jordan and the invitation of representatives of both the private and public sectors in Jordan to attend sessions and exhibitions specialized in the medical field in France. The Commercial Section is also in the process of financing complete turnkey units on the financial protocol for the public sector.

The event is being held under the patronage of the Minister of Health Dr Ashraf Al Kurdi, the French Ambassador to Jordan and Mrs Marie-Madeleine Dautel, of the French Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, the CEME-ACTIM (Agency for the International Promotion of French Technology and Trade) in collaboration with the Commercial Section of the French Embassy.

## European Commission release ECU 40 million in structural adjustment support to Jordan

AMMAN—In support of its ongoing structural adjustment programme, Jordan will within the coming days receive ECU 40 million from the European Commission (EC). The amount represents the second and final tranche of an ECU 100 million financial package made available from the Commission's MEDA Programme, an aid instrument adopted in July 1996 and based on the principles of the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 to launch a Euro-Mediterranean partnership and reinforce European Union (EU) financial and technical support for its Mediterranean partners. It follows the official agreement signed between the EC and Jordan on 10 October 1996, which in broad terms summarized the specific objectives of financial package as i) provision of budgetary support, ii) enhancement of structural reforms, and iii) easing of social reforms and improvement of the social safety net.

This support from MEDA aims at alleviating the external and fiscal pressures on the Jordanian economy and reduce the social cost of reforms. Moreover, it underscores the EU's commitment to Jordan's key role in the peace process and to the success of its new economic reform programme for 1996-1998. The grant will in particular assist in the implementation of these reforms, which the agreement states are critical to ensure the smooth operation of a free-trade area between Jordan and the EU. Steps towards trade liberalization, privatization and design of a modern tax system are part of the new reforms necessary to ensure that Jordan benefits from unprecedented opportunities offered by the peace process and accession to the WTO.

The EU forces that, by alleviating balance of payments constraints, the present grant will also assist Jordan in achieving higher growth rates, which according to the EU is the most efficient means to reduce unemployment and poverty.

## Victaulic introduces it's mechanical piping products

IN COOPERATION with Al Maaden Trading & Marketing Est.—Alphacan sole agents and distributors—Victaulic launched its product range of mechanical piping products in the Jordanian market.

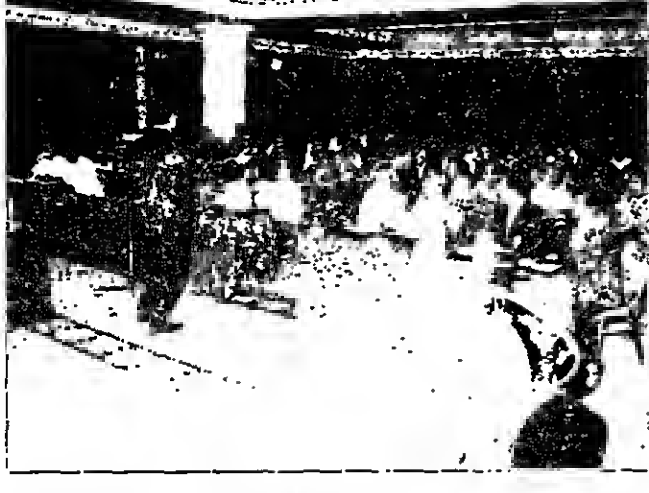
The product launch was inaugurated with a technical seminar and open discussion about the different Victaulic products and systems. Last week, following the seminar there was an open dinner discussion about the Victaulic System and its applicability to different projects in Jordan. The guests then had the chance to see a live demonstration on the grooving machine.

The seminar, which was held at the International Hotel, was attended by many mechanical consultants and contractors, as well as mechanical engineers and project owners who are interested in the Victaulic System and the grooved piping concepts.

Victaulic is the world's leading developer and producer of mechanical piping systems. Utilizing over 70 years of piping innovation leadership, Victaulic is a world-wide supplier of unique and creative solutions to piping needs.

At Victaulic, quality is more than a slogan. It is a pervasive corporate philosophy which directs the entire process of meeting customers' requirements on time. Victaulic has achieved ISO 9000 certification, with all world-wide locations, securing the highest attainable ISO levels. Each of the 2,000 employees participate in an on going quality improvement process with the goal of continual improvement.

Victaulic Company's history has been based upon meeting the needs of the marketplace with solutions to piping problems. It started from the basic idea of providing a



# Japan's economic package fails to excite

By Paul Abrahams

THE DAYS leading up to the latest package aimed at rekindling Japan's economy were full of sound and fury. Politicians from the ruling Liberal Democratic party competed and contradicted each other publicly on their ideas to kick-start the economy. But when the new policies were announced yesterday, they appeared to signify very little at all.

The disappointment was palpable: the stock market plunged, while the bond market, which had been spooked in recent days by the possibility of a fiscal loosening aimed at stimulating the economy, recovered lost ground.

"Expectations of what the package would deliver were so low that it was quite an achievement on the part of the LDP to disappoint the market," said Richard Jernan, senior economist at ING Barings in Tokyo.

The main criticism was the lack of detail. The LDP said it would attempt to boost the property market by freezing or abolishing land holdings tax and introducing measures making it easier to securitize real estate loans. It would also try to help business by trying to cut corporate tax. But there was no indication of the timing of the changes, their scale, or whether they could actually be achieved.

"There were no numbers. You just had a set of proposals," said Michael Harnett, senior economist at Merrill Lynch in Japan. "It was astonishingly short on specifics," agreed Robert Feldman, chief economist at Salomon Brothers in Tokyo.

"There was simply nothing you could put a number on."

The lack of detail reflected the unfinished struggle between parts of the LDP which want to deregulate and reduce taxes and the powerful Ministry of Finance which wants to maintain its tax revenues. The politicians and the bureaucrats failed to reach a compromise.

The second main concern was the lack of coherency within the proposals. "There appeared to be no clear fiscal philosophy," said Feldman. "The administration is committed to reducing the role of the state and maintaining fiscal austerity."

"But at the same time there appears to be a special fund for small struggling businesses, accelerated public spending, support for the agricultural sector, and early wage hikes for public sector workers." Such elements underlined the continuing importance of micro-political influences on policy.

Upper chamber elections are due in July. Measures to support the agricultural economy should bolster the LDP's

## Business Chronicle

### More price hikes to follow

SINCE MORE than a year, the country started to experience a series of price hikes which began with the price increase in August 1996. It was followed by the increase of vegetables and fruits prices, and the lifting of subsidy on sugar, powdered milk and rice. According to a recent report by the Jordan Consumer Protection Society the water price increase is a lot worse than the bread hikes that led to the Karak riots.

Also electricity rates were increased. The first 160 kilowatts are sold at a fixed rate while the next 160 kilowatts at another, and the rate continues to increase thereafter.

Despite protests by people, the majority of whom have low or medium-sized income, the government justifies these measures as steps to rationalize consumption and stresses on the need for austerity regulations to curtail expenditure and reduce indebtedness.

Early this month, the Water Ministry began to implement the new water tariff passed by the government last May.

In spite of the sliding scale principle which depends on the increase in consumption, the burden on people is likely to be felt. One citizen stresses that such a step has added to our financial obligations, which are already too high, especially for people with limited income.

He adds it would have been fairer if such a decision was only applicable to the rich who live in villas with swimming pools. These people consume large quantities of water for "secondary" usage, while the middle class utilizes water for basic needs.

Officials at the ministry stress that the decision doesn't apply to those whose water consumption remain at the level of 50 cubic metres. If consumption exceeds this, then the bill will certainly go up or even double.

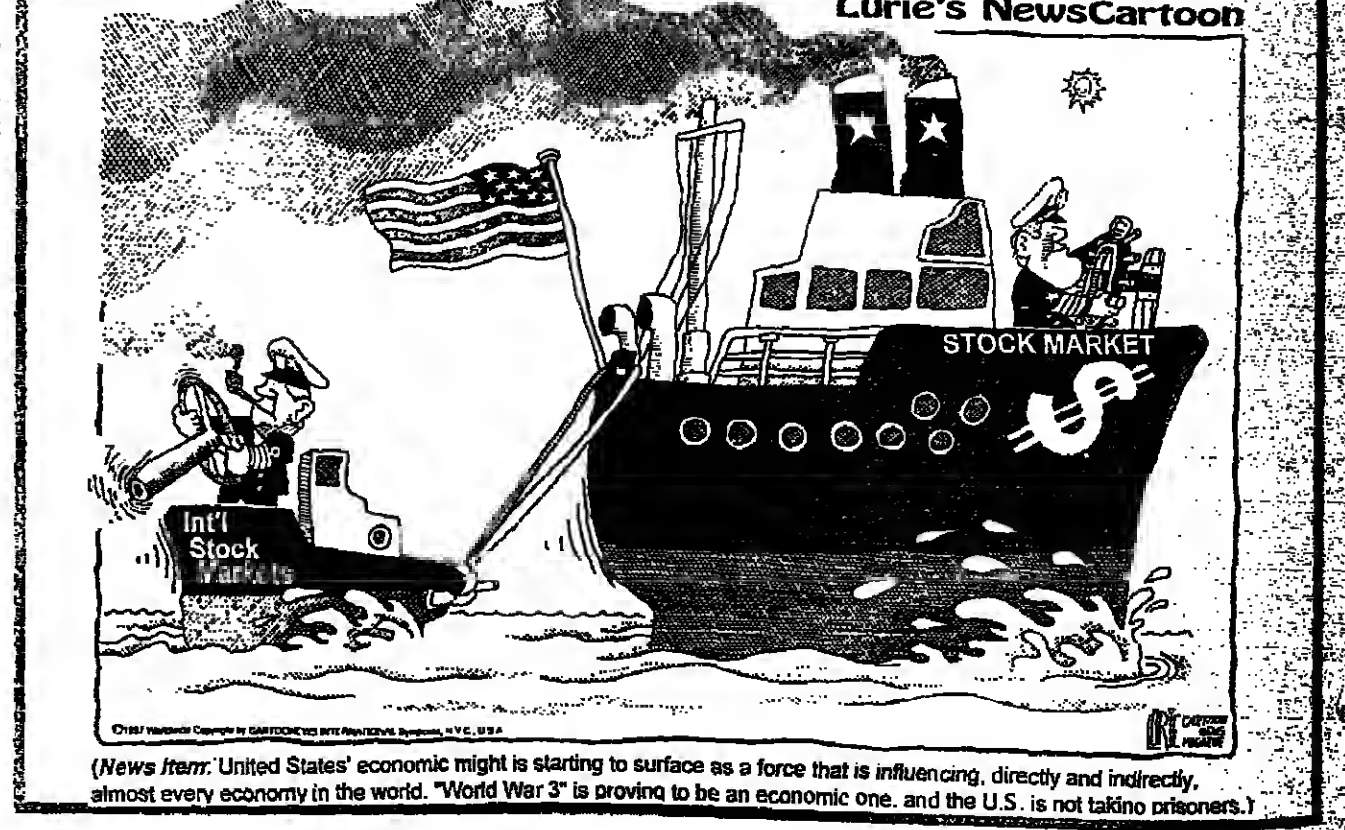
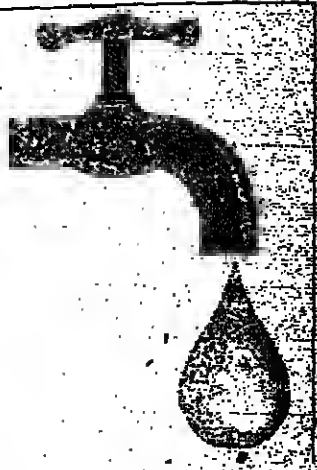
For example, if the water consumption reaches 70 cubic metres, the bill would have been JD 12.7, according to the old prices however, this will increase to JD 14.7 in line with the new rates.

The worry is not the new rates per se, but the consequences these rates have for the other vital sectors of the economy. What is not realized is that water is vital for industry, hakeeries, animal breeders and above all, agriculture. The quantity of water available for industrial and irrigation usage will naturally affect the quality of the produce.

Farmers, especially those who earn their living by planting in green houses, could arguably be said to have the most to lose.

Those farmers are exposed to failure in their crop since they wouldn't be able to cover their water bills. Consequently, they won't have sufficient money either to improve the quality of their production or treat their plants or protect them against blights.

But clearly what is at stake here is increases in salaries. If prices of basic and consumer goods are constantly going up, what is needed is a concerted effort by the government to increase the income of the country's salaried classes.



(News Item: United States' economic might is starting to surface as a force that is influencing, directly and indirectly, almost every economy in the world. "World War 3" is proving to be an economic one, and the U.S. is not taking prisoners.)

## Law dynamo

AMMAN—The Ministry of Justice has just been given the go-ahead to launch a new law firm in the Jordanian market. The move is seen as a significant step in the development of the legal profession in the country.

The new firm, which is headed by a prominent legal expert, is expected to provide a wide range of legal services to both individuals and corporations. This move is seen as a significant step in the development of the legal profession in the country.

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# Blueprint for modern morality

**By Michael Ratcliffe**

TRY BUYING a paperback copy of *The Outsider* by Albert Camus, and you will be told that it is no longer kept on the open shelves. The title suggests a blueprint for survival to the marginalized and disaffected? Perhaps, but more because it identifies the need for a modern morality in a blunt and accessible manner, how should we behave towards one another and conduct our lives? And, most of all, of course, because Camus' grim comedy of a drifting between two deaths is a slim set-text that slips up the sleeve quite sweetly.

Nobelled in 1957 at the age of 43, this pied-noir, left-wing, anti-communist member of the Algerian working-class was buried with Parisian obsequies of respectful eulogy after his death in a car smash three years later. Not only had he won the prize that everyone except Sartre thought should have gone to Malraux, but he had kept a loyal wife and three devoted mistresses simultaneously, and was well on the way to becoming the most widely read French writer of the century. He was a prophet of the post-ideology age, who wisely said that the modern heart is a heart that cannot bear to be judged. Olivier Todd's new biography dogged, informative, but often ill-edited and cack-handedly translated tells us the supremacy of Camus with readers is now unchallenged in France and beyond. His honest confusions have become the century's own.

The ability to propose a code of behaviour does not, of course, mean that you are obliged to behave well yourself; were this so, there would be no point in writing or reading literary biographies at all. Malraux and Simone de Beauvoir both thought that the gap between work and life was unusually large in the case of Camus. Todd's narrative suggests that the same enervating contradictions informed both, but it is clear that he was a neglectful husband, an attentive father, an insatiable lover and a difficult (though never tricky) friend. Even at the time, in 1952, the break-up with Sartre was compared in the cafes of Montparnasse and Saint-Germain to the end of an affair.

*L'etranger* was published by Gaston Gallimard in 1942, the German military



censor in Paris, having nodded it through as both asocial and apolitical, thus missing the point that therein lay its subversiveness. (Or did he? He would never have passed it in Hitler's Germany.) Like most French writers and artists, Camus remained in France throughout the Nazi and Vichy years. Without the Occupation, he would never have written his masterpiece, *La Peste* (The Plague, 1947). He joined the French Resistance in 1943, and edited the flysheet *Combat*, dangerously, from a secret office in the rue Reaumur for the last 18 months of the war.

As an Orwellian journalist in Algiers and Paris before and after the war, he fought dehumanization on all fronts, and said the unsayable, long before it was smart to do so, on Stalin's extermination and prison camps in the 1930s, for example, getting himself thrown out of the French Communist Party; and on the mysterious, retrospective burgeoning of Resistance-membership after 1945. He was a tireless prodder of French sacred cows: Robespierre, Rimbaud, Sade, revenge, revolution, and above all, the guilt-delivered independence of Algeria which, grandly brought off by de Gaulle two years after Camus' death, would have

broken his heart. Born between poverty and sunlight, he believed nobly, but hopelessly, in the honour of the Mediterranean world.

The love of his life was the supreme actress Maria Casares, who died only last year. The total, uncomplicated delight on his face as he watches her in a photograph is a great relief from the solemn image with which he usually faced the world: part Bogart and part Fennel, as he himself defined it, with a cigarette between the fingers or bluishly stuck in the mouth. He was a ladies' man, and, like many such, praised girls for their manly qualities, and had a bit of a thing about sissies. He was a passionate Mozartian, though, which in the rougher parts of Algiers might have been thought a fairly sissy thing to be, and he called his old donkey Panina. Into the edges of this story at various points walk a dog called Pauline and the cats Brilliant and Cigarette. You can't get more French than that.

I have not seen the original of Todd's book, published in France last year, but it has not been well served by Random House, which commissioned an American translation from Benjamin Irvy and briefed him to cut it. In a note, Irvy explains he has removed material deemed uninteresting to the American and British general reader, and all notes and source-references from the back, integrating "necessary information" into the narrative text. This is often clumsily done: "Later that evening, when they were eating a North African stew of mutton and vegetables, called tajine, at a friend's house, Camus..."

The translation is not into any kind of lively American, but into East Coast Quaint "coosomth", "herky-jerky", "pled" for "pleaded", "fit" for "fitted" while some of the renderings from Camus' French read like barely comprehensible first drafts: "Should one bring the obsession with a work to the emptiness of a humdrum life, or on the contrary should one make one's life worthy of it by obeying flashes of lightning?" Yes, indeed, I hope we are all asking ourselves those questions every morning.

# Tragedy of genius ignored

**By Jackie Wullschlaeger**

A FRESH reading of the hatchet jobs which greeted the Brontë sisters' novels exactly 150 years ago does not produce the best mindset for beginning a review. Thwarted in their attempts to start a school at their father's isolated parsonage in the Yorkshire moors, dispirited from their stints as governesses, Charlotte, Emily and Anne determined to convert their highly-developed fantasy worlds into a business.

Juliet Barker, as a spin-off from her biography of all the Brontës, has combined numerous extracts from their letters with contemporary reviews, accounts and memoirs in an attempt to let the Brontë family and friends tell their own stories in their own words.

That she has been only partly successful is not surprising. With only an occasional linking narrative and no explanatory or identifying footnotes to provide context, the reader is often left perplexed by these captured moments as companion.

In addition, Anne and Emily contribute few letters, their father's almost never escape from pure formality, and their brother Branwell's missives alternate between cringemaking bragging and morbid self-pity. Thus Charlotte, as she did in life, is left to carry the family banner almost single-handedly.

At least two aspects, however, emerge more forcefully from this skewed picture than they could from a biography whose material is balanced and unvarnished. Most affecting is the soul-numbing despondency which weighs increasingly heavily upon Charlotte. First, she witnesses the deaths of her two older sisters from tuberculosis soon after their mother's death had forced them to be sent to a mean and dank school for clergyman's daughters. Then, years later, she watched

the debauched Branwell's death also from tuberculosis followed shortly by Emily and Anne's deaths from the same affliction.

Alone on their moors, Charlotte found each and every reminder of her beloved family unbearable until she herself died some 10 years later in the early stages of pregnancy.

The other strong impression, again a negative one, is the shocking condescension, cruelty and sheer stupidity with which critics almost to a man greeted each of the sisters' attempts to write fiction. Collectively, and despite writing under male pseudonyms, the Brontës were accused of taking as their subjects "the eccentricities of 'woman's fantasy'", failing to shy away from acts of physical cruelty which "true taste rejects".

Without a blush, these reviewers assaulted the Brontës' female natures, elevating taste and decorum in women above what is now considered their literary genius. Anne's first novel attracted almost no notice, and her second, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, was said to reveal the writer as having "a morbid love for the coarse". Another magazine reported that their reviewer had returned the novel in disgust and warned its readers against the book's "profane expressions, inconceivably coarse language, and revolting scenes".

Emily's *Wuthering Heights* was deemed a "strange, inartistic story", all the characters being "utterly hateful or thoroughly contemptible". So discouraged were Emily and her publishers by this reception that the novel's sequel was not commissioned; the publisher even neglected to pay her what was owed, and she was dead soon afterwards.

Only *Jane Eyre* attracted some favourable (though mixed) notices, and even this popular success earned Charlotte such comments as "a



book more unfeminine it would be hard to find," and "never was there a better hater" than its author.

Charlotte's second novel, *Shirley*, opens with a scene quite as "vulgar, unnecessary and disgusting" as was the family in *Jane Eyre*. *The Times*, addressing itself sneeringly to the "fair authoress", found the novel "at once the most high-flown and the stalest of fictions". Mrs Gaskell, herself a successful woman novelist who kept within the prescribed cheerful bounds, observed that this last notice caused the normally composed Charlotte to hide behind the newspaper's large sheets with "tears stealing down the face and dropping on the lap".

Even within the pantheon of famous books which were originally rejected or badly received, this bunch of self-satisfied morons must stand on their own. Only Charlotte lived to see herself and them all at least partially vindicated. By the time Emily had been hailed by at least one critic as a genius, the pungency of her sister's never knowing her posthumous triumph was almost too much for Charlotte.

As these young novelists are now ranked with only a handful of other writers at the genre's pinnacle, their critics have a lot to answer for. May it continue to humble us all.

## Latest books examine dynamics of the Mideast

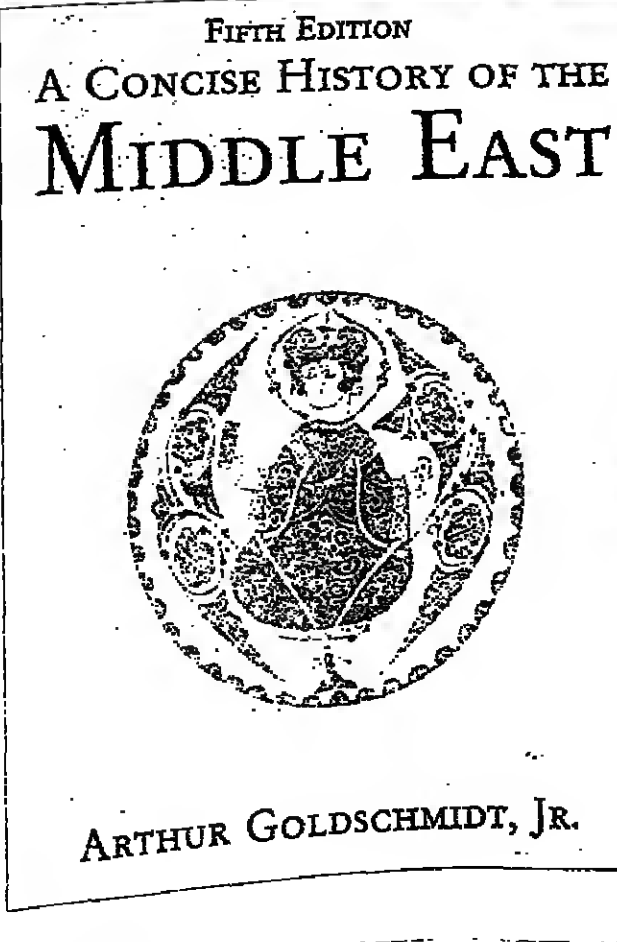
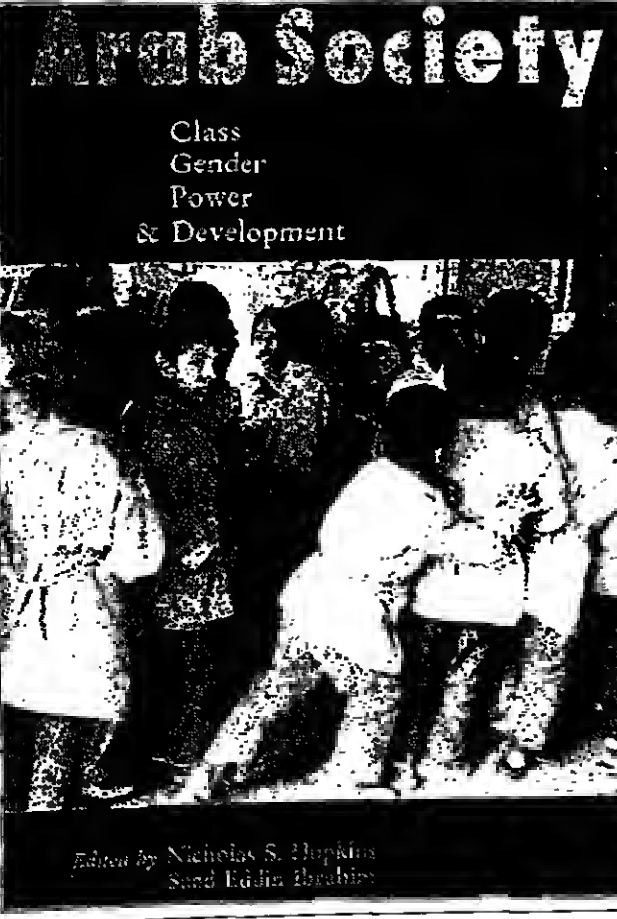
**AMMAN (Star)**—Two latest books on the Middle East have just been published by the American University in Cairo Press. They should prove of excellent value to any researcher and academic specializing in this part of the world. *Arab Society, Class, Gender, Power and Development*, is a collection of articles by leading scholars that examine Arab society in the 1990s.

The editors of the book are Nicholas S. Hopkins and Saad Al Din Ibrahim, both of whom are professors at the American University in Cairo.

The book comprises 30 new articles by leading scholars exploring such subjects as Arab unity and identity; demographic processes; the roles of men, women, and family; rural social change; political developments; and religious change. For students, scholars, and general readers alike, *Arab Society* offers up-to-date analysis and discussion of the social, political, and economic transformations that face the region today.

The second book, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, is fifth edition of Arthur Goldschmidt's widely acclaimed text which has been extensively revised to reflect the latest scholarship and the most recent events in the Middle East, including the aftermath of the Gulf War and the issues surrounding the "Palestinian Question".

As an introduction to the history of this turbulent region from the beginnings of Islam to the present day, the book is distinguished by its clear style, broad scope, and balanced treatment. Written for college students, the text assumes no prior knowledge of Middle East history. It focuses on the evolution of Islamic institutions and culture, the influence of the West, the modernization efforts of Middle Eastern governments, the struggle of various people for political independence, the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the reassertion of Islamic values and power. The two books are well worth reading.



## An American patriot for me

**By A.C. Grayling**

GORE VIDAL is a phenomenon. He is a master of mordant, savage, scathing, amusing, intelligent, penetrating prose; and he is one of the few genuinely sane people in the world. It is the fate of these latter to be thought perfectly mad, which is why he will not be, as he should be, put straight into the White House without delay, to save the United States of America and thereby, coincidentally, the entire world.

Vidal is an American patriot. This claim will doubtless puzzle those defenders of today's United States, who have been mercilessly and usually hilariously skewered by his pen. But it is true: he is a patriot of the old Republic that was demolished after the second world war to make way for the "National Security State", invented by Harry S. Truman and the monster corporations which own the media and the arms manufacturers and therefore in short USA Inc. itself. Like a senator of Augustan Rome who looked back to the liberties of a purer pre-imperial past, Vidal has a homeland: his most formative years were passed in witnessing its disappearance.

If Vidal had his way, there would be a Constitutional Convention to reform America's institutions of government, as desired by the Founding Fathers who expected that their arrangements would need periodic modification. Thomas Jefferson wanted a Convention at least once a generation because "you cannot expect a man to wear a boy's jacket." Article Five of the Constitution provides for just such a thing. Once the Supreme Court ceases to be the Executive's tool, says Vidal, and both Executive and Congress cease to be employees of the giant corporations who bankroll their elections, the necessary work can be done: America's economy can be converted from a war footing to peace (make bullet trains rather than submarines), a national health service can be instituted (no longer blocked by the insurance companies who pay Congressmen), power can be devolved from the surreal confines of Wash-

ington's Beltway, and a proper representative democracy will withdraw America from its expensive and immoral empire. The five trillion dollar debt accumulated by successive administrations to pay for the Cold war will not be discharged at a stroke; but the country would at least be moving in the right direction.

Vidal aims a scorching stream of sarcasm at those American conservatives ("whatever that word now means," he remarks, pointing out that the US has only one political party with two right wings) who wish to retain the US's imperial role, ostensibly because American hegemony maintains global peace ("tell that to the Asians") but in reality to keep America's arms companies in business, and their bosses who now take a larger slice of wealth, and pay less back in taxes, than ever before in comfort.

Vidal's timeliness gets a mauling, but his faithful acolyte does not escape. Britain, "those bright and islands where ignorance must be lightly worn," has followed the US in evolving a single-two-right-wing-party system: asked during the late election which of the two is further to the right, Vidal loftily remarked, "One does not bring a measuring rod to Lilliput."

The second and third parts of this three-part collection of essays are concerned with politics and policy, in which Vidal and his genes have together been marinated for half, if not more, of the US's history. What Vidal shows is not pretty; for all the delicious acidity of his wit, his point is earnest. But note this: Vidal does not hate the US, only what it does, both at home and

abroad. Like the remarkable journalist he so admires, Andy Kopkind, Vidal has a "separate war" not with America, but with its unaccountable corporate paymasters and their servants within the Beltway.

The first section of the book collects essays about books and writers. Here as everywhere else Vidal remains that rare thing, a high pleasure and a deep education combined. He never pulls punches: he likes or he dislikes, and gives cogent reasons. His pessimism about politics is mirrored by pessimism about reading and the fate of the novel (he thinks the day of such things is over, displaced by the Internet and other, more general, forms of illiteracy. He should be happy to learn that he is wrong: in the arid British Isles, more books are published every year than in any other country, and more people are reading them).

The essay in which Vidal slowly, pitilessly, beautifully skins and guts that hapless Rabbit, John Updike, is a masterpiece: the naked top-eared corpse is left oozing slowly on the spike Vidal drives up its vertical axis as a warning to anyone who dares beard him. If the essay on Dawn Powell does not revive merited interest in her work, nothing will: likewise, Vidal's illuminations of Sinclair Lewis and Mark Twain show what intelligent discourse about books should be like, a lesson for that class of individuals Vidal so magnificently despises (and, in these essays, so utterly routs), the college professors.

This is all outstandingly good stuff. Ten cheers for Gore Vidal.

## ROCK TRACKS

**By Stacy Jenel Smith**

Bad news for Madonna. They've cast a look-alike to play the material girl in ABC's adaptation of Dennis Rodman's "Bad As I Wanna Be." According to sources familiar with the script, it shows her meeting Rodman to interview him for Vibe magazine. Their chemistry is shown heating up, and then they're seen going back to Madonna's place, where she gets turned on by Dennis' passion and power, and, well, full court press. My heart goes out to Madonna on this one! It's bad enough when he writes about it, but to see it spewed all over television! The NBA's favorite cross-dresser will not be playing himself in the bio-pie. However, he will appear in it, and provide voice-over narration. Shooting starts this month.

Don't be surprised if David Bowie does a mini-tour at summer's end.

U2's reps have been fighting back hard over damning stories that the Pop Mart tour has seen soft sales at a few venues — reminding press at every opportunity that U2 is the only stadium tour this summer, leading all other touring acts by a huge margin. One promoter was quoted saying the only tour that could touch it would be a Rolling Stones tour. Of course by summer's end, we'll have a chance to see how the Stones fare out there.

Michael Nesmith is still best-known as a Monkee — but he's also way ahead of the curve as an original thinker. (Or didn't you know he was producing rock videos before MTV got big?) Right now, Nesmith is making preparations for the fifth Council on Ideas. It's an idea Nesmith instigated in 1992, to bring together great thinkers from a wide range of professions and have them put a focus on pressing issues of the day. Past Council members have included Nobel Prize-winning physicist Arno Penzias, architect Frank Gehry, Washington Post Deputy National Editor Roberto Suro, and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Wendy Wasserstein. Coming forth from these gatherings have been ideas ranging from improving education to the impact of government lagging behind the information technology boom. "This is, literally, a gathering of the elders," says Nesmith. This year's nominees include the former president of a European country, CEOs of major corporations, and college presidents. The five appointees will be revealed in February.

OK, you swingers. It looks like the film biography of Bobby Darin might go into production early next year. This is the story of the late singer that Johnny Depp's been interested in for a long time — with talk that Drew Barrymore might play the love of Darin's life, his wife Sandra Dee. Barry Levinson, who's been developing the movie for eight years with Arthur Friedman, is expected to decide soon whether this will be his next directing project. Friedman thinks it will be — and apparently, so does Sandra Dee. She is now negotiating a book deal for her life story, which theoretically would come out at the same time as the movie. And the '60s screen sweetheart is in talks with Universal about rereleasing her films, like "Summer Place," on video. If that deal goes through, Dee herself will star in infomercials pitching the pictures.

The Star  
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly  
Online  
http://www.arabia.com/star



# AROUND TOWN

## Major exhibit Dead Sea treasures is currently on display in UK

"TREASURES OF THE Dead Sea, the Cooper Scroll after 2000 years" is the title of the exhibition that is being held at the Manchester Museum in the UK.

This special event celebrates the 50th anniversary of this century's greatest archaeological discovery for understanding the history and religion of early Judaism and nascent Christianity—the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The first seven of these famous scrolls were discovered in 1947. In 1952 The Copper Scroll was found in Cave 3 near Qumran, together with more Dead Sea Scrolls. It is the only one to have been made of beaten copper. It is made up of three sheets of copper, with 12 brief columns of writing, and contains a list of treasure: large amounts of gold silver and other priceless items. These were hidden in various places in the area, probably before the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Romans in AD 70. It was cut open in Manchester in 1953-1956 so that it could be read. Through the generosity of the Jordanian Antiquities Dept., the scroll returns to

Manchester to provide a focal point of the exhibition.

As well as setting the Copper Scroll in its context, the exhibition brings together examples of other kinds of Dead Sea Scrolls including biblical manuscripts from the first century BC and sectarian Jewish texts probably related to the ancient Essenes. Some of the University of Manchester's Dead Sea Scroll fragments will also be on display for the first time.

Together with other ancient artefacts which throw light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the exhibition is completed with a short film on the Copper Scroll, its opening, conservation, and interpretation, made by Electricity de France, one of several sponsors of the whole show.

The scrolls from Qumran were written by different scribes over many years (c.250 BCE - 50 CE). Very few were written by the same scribe, and most were brought from elsewhere, but they form some kind of collection, and share certain characteristics—e.g. they measure the year in 364 days, not 354. ■

## An evening of triumph for Horizon

HORIZON ADVERTISING proudly attracted the lustrous lights of victory during the Anba's Advertising Awards recently held at the Kuwait Sheraton Hotel.

The agency stepped up to the crowning stage twice that evening to receive two coveted awards. The first one was for the best creative in the "Investment" category for the Kuwait Finance House. The award was received by Mr Saad Hijawi, President of the Horizon Network and Managing Director of Horizon Kuwait. Expressing his feeling about this stimulating win, he said: "This is a great moment for me and Horizon, I am sure everyone at the agency shares the same feeling and I'm definitely looking forward for more and bigger achievements." Mr Hijawi thanked the Kuwait Finance House for their trust in our Agency and for making the joint triumph possible by their support of creativity that is effective among consumers and an award winner among advertising professionals.

The triumph peaked when the laureate Horizon was up on the stage again to receive their second award for "Best Press Campaign of 1996," which was also won for Kuwait Finance House. This category conceived the notion of the best campaign for the entire year, which emphasizes the weight given for such a win. Such an award brings pride and ecstasy due to the fact that many well presented campaigns were up against the Kuwait Finance House campaign.

The prestigious award was accepted by Mr Said Zeineddine, Senior Client Services Manager, whose speech on the occasion thoughtfully conveyed "special thanks to our creative team who is the real hero behind this award." ■

## Silsal Ceramics Craftsmanship at its best

POTTERY MAKING as an ancient craft was one of the arts that played an important role in the flourishing of a civilization. In Islam, as well as the empires preceding it, the skilled artisan was highly regarded by members of the court, and invited to travel from faraway lands to become a handsomely paid protégé of that court.

As a result, the ceramist was very proud of his craft and accordingly signed each piece of pottery quite conspicuously for posterity. It is this tradition of pottery making that Silsal continues today. The artisanal quality of the craft is emphasized in each of Silsal's handmade pieces.

Silsal bowls, jugs, plates, mugs and vases are primarily functional and are meant to be enjoyed through daily use. A '90s spirit helps the modern day user identify with the pieces and the simplicity of the shapes and designs, rendering them inherently practical.

An appreciation for the environment and sensitivity to all living things makes nature a constant inspiration for Silsal's designs. Simple lines stylized to represent a leaf, a fruit, a flower, an animal or a bird provide endless subject matter for creating unique pieces.

The human figure at its most primitive is also represented in Silsal's pottery. Here the humility of the human figure, stripped of its

elaborate clothing, heightens its elegance, dignity and grace. The figures, depicted in motion are dancing, touching, and sending the message that in such a pluralistic world, there is beauty in harmony and tolerance. Some of these pieces are inspired by African art, some by Matisse.

Following the Islamic tradition of using script as a decorative element, Arabic calligraphy has always been part of Silsal's designs. The recent pieces bring calligraphy to more abstract dimensions, emphasizing the aesthetic value of the lines and rendering the meaning of the words altogether unimportant. The beauty of the script and the interest created by the juxtaposition of the letters against one another provides such tremendous aesthetic potential as to transcend the need to finish a sentence or the urge to keep it readable. As progressive as this concept may appear, it is only the continuation of a tradition started by our ancestor artisans hundreds of years ago.

Silsal's artisanal character shows uniquely in each piece of pottery produced, bringing together the input of some 20 artists. Working as a team gives the artisans at Silsal the opportunity to dialogue, transcending individual character in the aim of artistic excellence. The exhibition is starting, 25 October ■

## Fortune winners

THE FIRST ever survey of what global companies think of their peers has ranked British Airways as the world's number one airline.

The elite list was drawn up by readers of US business magazine Fortune, in conjunction with the Hay Group Consultancy.

Fortune has compiled an annual survey of the top corporations in the USA for the past 15 years and inclusion has become the business equivalent of the Academy Awards.

This year's poll widened its scope to include companies from around the world.

British Airways headed off competition from Northwest, Southeast, American, United, Lufthansa, Delta, All Nippon, and JAL to top the league.

The magazine described the companies that led the way in 19 separate commercial categories as appealing to the business community with a mixture of "terrific product or service, shrewd financial management and far-sighted marketing that, as the catch phrase has it, thinks global and acts local."

The airlines First product and customer research initiatives also boosted its success, according to the magazine.

The Fortune award follows a recent Financial Times/Price Waterhouse survey among senior executives throughout Europe which voted British Airways as the UK's top company and the leader in the continents transport sector. ■



## Turkish fashion show set dazzle Amman

THE TURKISH Embassy in Amman in cooperation with the InterContinental Hotel, are holding a fashion show by renowned Turkish fashion designer Zuhair Yorgancıoglu on 24 and 25 October.

During the event, which will take place at the InterContinental Hotel, Jordan, Yorgancıoglu's unique creations will be displayed in a most unusual fashion show presented by top professional models from Turkey.

Mrs. Yorgancıoglu has been involved in the world of fashion for 30 years. She, by rediscovering the beauty of Turkish design and embroidery, has set herself on the research, rise and promotion of Turkish arts, handicrafts and fashion. Her collections include elegant gowns and caftans of silk, satin and velvet, lavishly hand embroidered with gold and silver threads. Mrs Yorgancıoglu has shown her creations in many cities around the world, including Paris, London, Rome, Washington, DC, Brussels, Cairo, Chicago, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The fashion show is being organized under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha Bint El Hussein and part of the proceeds will be donated to the Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped. The main sponsors of the event are Turkish Airlines, Royal Jordanian, ATA Construction, Industry and InterContinental Hotel Jordan. ■

## Inter.Con. Jordan takes part in Berlin event

CHEF ELIAS Abu El Hawa from the InterContinental Jordan was asked by the Berlin Forum Hotel to participate in the 150 year celebrations for Siemens that took place in Berlin-Germany. He joined a number of other well known international chefs in preparing some mouth watering dishes.

The three-day celebrations took place at the Berlin Exhibition Centre in Berlin, where a buffet representing the six continents was served to the guests.

Mr Abu El Hawa did it again, he dazzled the Berliners with his famous Jordanian dishes and brought the taste of Arabia to Germany. ■

## Turtles, snakes & 60,000 children help "Fanta" to break a record

THE COCA-COLA Company believes that the participation of 60,000 children aged 6 to 13 in its recent FANTA essay writing and drawing competition in Lebanon makes it the highest ever response to such a competition in the Arab World.

The competition was organized through a travelling play supported by "FANTA" and presented by Mimi Farah which toured schools presenting a story about the dangers of ignoring the environmental needs of the earth. At the end of the play children were encouraged to draw a picture or write an essay on why acting responsibly with the environment is important.

The 10 winners of the competition recently enjoyed their prize of a free four-day visit to Cyprus, as guests of The Coca-Cola Company. The trip centred on a visit to a Nature Studies Centre, a non-profit making organization that specializes in programs for children. The children visited Lara beach—a

turtle habitat. Snake Gorge, Avakas Gorge as well as attending a Flora and Fauna tour of Akamas—a natural wilderness area.

The children learnt about environmental protection, the various species of flora and fauna—some endangered or protected. The programme was activity focused with children spending most of their time finding specific plants, catching bugs, tracking and looking for evidence of an animal population.

David Helou, the Coca-Cola Company's manager in Lebanon said: "We wanted to reflect The Coca-Cola Company's concern for the environment in a way that children would identify with. The play 'FANTA EARTH SONG' covered environmental issues in a fun way which the children, clearly responded well to. The standards of the essays and pictures was excellent and demonstrated that the play's messages had been understood by the children." ■

## Austrian Airlines holds annual conference in Amman

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES held their annual conference for the Middle East at the Dead Sea Hotel, on 14-15 October.

Among participants in the meeting were the Airlines managers in Turkey, Syria, Iran, Lebanon, the Arabian Gulf and Jordan. A delegation from Austrian Airlines in Austria also attended the event.

During the two-day venue touristic trips were organized for the participants and the visiting delegation expressed satisfaction with facilities provided by officials at the Queen Aliu International Airport to make their visit a success.

Austrian Airlines also held a reception for the delegation in cooperation with its agent in Jordan, Petra Travel and Tours Co.

This year marks the fifth anniversary for Austrian Airlines in Jordan.

Participating in the reception were representatives from many Arab Airlines operating in Jordan in addition to the press, businessmen and travel agents.



During the reception, Austrian Airlines Manager in Jordan, Mr Samir Abu Al Saud briefed the audience on the facilities offered by Austrian Airlines to travel and tours agents and travellers.

Also, he spoke about new routes that have become operational in Europe and American.

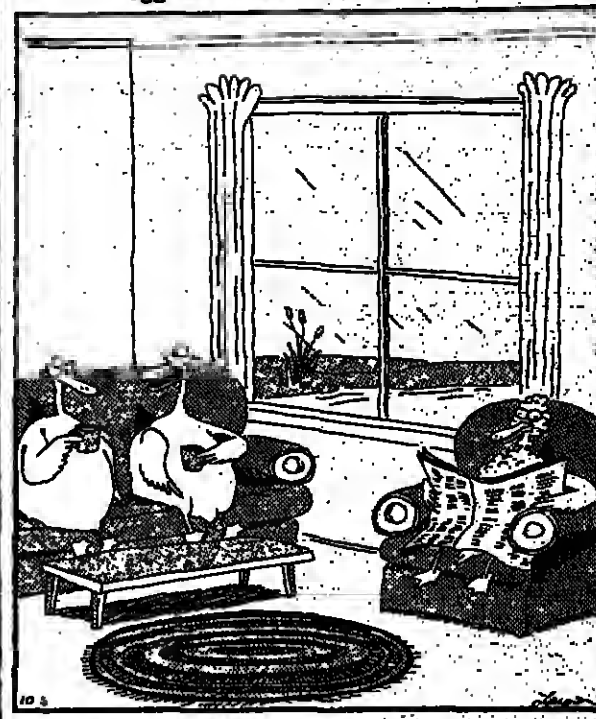
Mr Abu Saud distributed prizes for winners in competitions organized during the reception. ■

## THE FAR SIDE

BY GARET LARSON



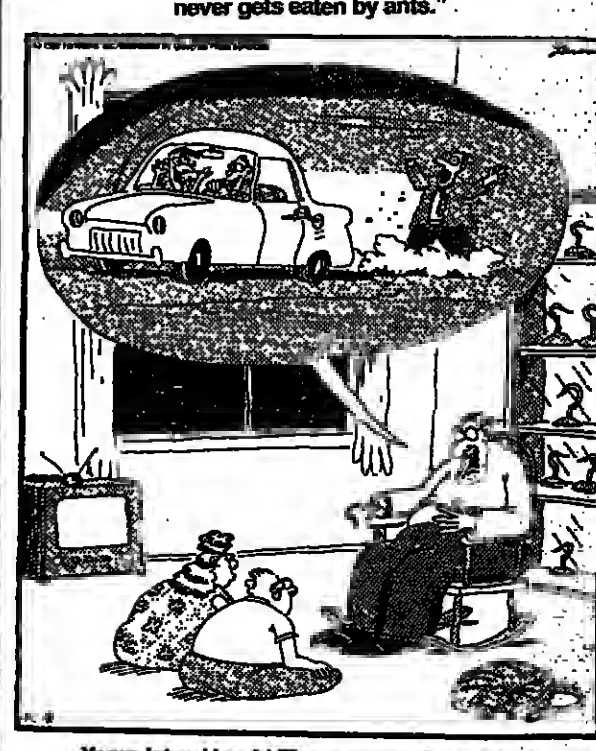
Historical note: For many years, until they became truly nasty, Vikings would plunder, loot and then egg the houses of coastal villagers.



"Oh, it's just Hank's little cross to bear—he's allergic to down and that's that."



"Little Bear! A watched head never gets eaten by ants."



Years later, Harold Zimmerman, the original "Hookhand" of campfire ghost stories, tells his grandchildren the Tale of the Two Evil Teen-agers.

## AGENDA

### Exhibitions

■ A group exhibition entitled "Aure Meditteranean" by the Spanish Catalan Masters of the 20th century continues at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts till 28 October.

■ Art Exhibition by Abdul Kader Bakheet continues at Instituto Cervantes till 30 October.

■ An Exhibition of painting and waving entitled "Murmurs of Our Land" by Riham Ghassib and Bari Hamida continues at Bari Hamida House till 30 October.

■ "Oriental Gem Trees" by Latif Hamdan at the Royal Cultural Center finish today 23 October.

■ An Exhibition of painting by Bahraini artist Sheikh Rashid Al Khalifa continues at Dar Al Funun till 15 November.

### Film

■ The Remains of the Day, at the American Center, Thursday, 23 October, 5:00 pm.

■ Family Towers at the British Council, Wednesday, 29 October, 5:00 pm.

■ Dino Babies at the British Council, Wednesday, 29 October, 5:00 pm.

■ Madame Bovary at the French Cultural Center, Wednesday, 29 October, 6:00 pm.

### Media Forum

■ Jordanian Parliamentary Elections '97. The forum will be held at the USIS Auditorium on Wednesday, 29 October at 4:00 pm.

2:00—Holy Koran  
2:10—Twinkl  
2:30—Muppet Show  
3:00—World of G  
4:00—The Valt P  
4:30—Breakmans  
5:00—French Pro  
5:30—News Hea  
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8:30—Democracy  
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9:30—News at 1  
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3:30—Riding Hig  
4:00—Animal St  
4:30—Ocean Girl



# The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 25-31 October

## Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): Escape From L.A.
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): Mission Impossible
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Men in Black
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): The Long Kiss Good Night
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Too Hot To Handle
- Galleria I (Tel: 634149): Con Air
- Galleria II (Tel: 634149): Jungle 2 Jungle

## MOVIE GUIDE

### Capsule reviews of current releases

OPINIONS ARE by Los Angeles Times reviewers. Ratings by the Motion Picture Association of America are: (G) for general audiences; (PG) parental guidance urged because of material possibly unsuitable for children; (PG-13) parents are strongly cautioned to give guidance for attendance of children younger than 13; (R) restricted, younger than 17 admitted only with parent or adult guardian; (NC-17) no one younger than 17 admitted.

● **Boogie Nights**: This dark comedy about the adult film business features, among others, Mark Wahlberg, Julianne Moore, Burt Reynolds, Don Cheadle and Ricky Jay. (R.)

● **Devil's Advocate**: Keanu Reeves is a young attorney who joins the firm of the charismatic Al Pacino and finds himself fighting for his soul — literally. Taylor Hackford directs. (R.)

● **The Edge**: What makes this traditional tale of men trying to survive in the Alaskan wilderness worthwhile is the on-screen rivalry between Anthony Hopkins and Bart the Bear, two consummate professionals who hold nothing back. Also starring Alec Baldwin. Written by David Mamet and directed by Lee Tamahori. (R.)

● **G.I. Jane**: Demi Moore is tough the way other people think they're tough in this old-fashioned combat movie directed by Ridley Scott, about a young woman who wants to be a Navy SEAL. Moore is great at being determined, but determination seems to be the only quality she's comfortable projecting on screen. (R.)

● **The Game**: David Fincher's follow-up to "Seven" is a journey into paranoia and manipulation for Michael Douglas' cold-hearted financial baron, whose 48th birthday gift from his brother (Sean Penn) propels him into a "Westworld"-like game of life and death. With Deborah Kara Unger, Amin Mueller-Stahl. (R.)

● **Gang Related**: A more than respectable cast, including Tupac Shakur and James Belushi, can't rescue an interminable, more than usually pointless film about scum of the earth cops who panic when their moral scum falls apart. Implausible is a mild word for the shenanigans audiences are expected to swallow. (R.)

● **IN & OUT**: Frank Oz's farcical comedy of the moment is a coolly funny exploration of what a chance remark does to the life of high school English teacher Howard Brackett (Kevin Kline) in a role that makes fine use of his remarkable gift for physical comedy. The film benefits from a deft collaboration between talents. (PG-13)

● **L.A. Confidential**: Director Curtis Hanson has taken James Ellroy's novel and a fine ensemble cast (including Kevin Spacey, Kim Basinger and Danny DeVito) and turned out what looks to be the definitive film noir for this particular time and place: cynical, hyperviolent, dripping with attitude, it's as unmythical as it is irresistible. (R.)

● **Lilies**: An aging convict's confession to a bishop becomes an occasion for revealing the betrayal that involved both men in their youth. (Unrated.)

● **Men In Black**: Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith are the kings of cool as government agents determined to keep visiting aliens from messing up planet Earth. A lively summer entertainment that marries a deadpan sense of humor with the strangest creatures around. (PG-13)

● **Most Wanted**: Keanu Reeves is a Persian Gulf war hero trying to elude capture on the streets of Los Angeles after being framed for assassinating the First Lady. Jon Voight and Paul Sorvino co-star. (R.)

● **The Peacemaker**: Action aplenty as George Clooney and Nicole Kidman costar as brave Americans trying to track down stolen nuclear warheads. First time feature director Mimi Leder has a zest for action but, inevitably, the character moments suffer. (R.)

● **Plan B**: Gary Leva's ensemble romantic comedy about a group of five thirty-something friends stars Jon Cryer, Lance Guest and Lisa Darr. (Unrated.)

● **Playing God**: David Duchovny is a surgeon who is drawn into the underworld as criminal Timothy Hutton's "gunshot doctor." (R.)

● **Seven Years in Tibet**: Forget all that talk about the Nazi past of mountaineer Heinrich Harrer, tutor to the Dalai Lama. This is an old-fashioned war vehicle that allows Brad Pitt to take off his shirt despite Tibet's chilly climate and has more in common with "Lost Horizon" than anything remotely political. (PG-13)

● **Soul Food**: Writer-director George Tillman's partially autobiographical memoir is an infectious blend of humor, sentiment and melodrama, about an African American family threatened with disintegration when its matriarch (Irma P. Hall) becomes seriously ill. Vanessa L. Williams, Vivica A. Fox and Nia Long star as Hall's three daughters. (R.)

● **Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt**: Michael Goldman's documentary on the legendary Arab singer, Omar Sharif narrates. (Unrated.)

● **U-Turn**: Director Oliver Stone is the latest Director to try his hand at a bleakly comic, nihilistic neo-noir in the style of writer Jim Thompson. A lot of style and skill invested in trifling material makes this a sporadically amusing waste of time. Sean Penn, Jennifer Lopez and Nick Nolte star. (R.)

● **Year Of The Horse**: Neil Young did the score for Jim Jarmusch's "Dead Man." Now the director captures Young and his band Crazy Horse onstage. (R.)

LA Times Washington Post News Service

## ENGLISH PROGRAMS

- SATURDAY**
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—Twinkle
  - 2:30—Muppet Show
  - 3:00—World of Geo
  - 4:00—The Vally Between
  - 4:30—Beakmans World
  - 5:00—French Programs
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Neighbors
  - 8:00—Newly Weds
  - 8:30—Prism
  - 9:10—Time Trax
  - 10:00—News at Ten
  - 10:30—Feature Film
  - 12:00—Allen
- SUNDAY**
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—Little Rosey
  - 2:30—Jonny Quest
  - 3:00—Energy Express
  - 3:40—Lucky Luky
  - 4:00—American Chart Show
  - 4:30—Tarazan
  - 6:00—French Programs
  - 7:00—News in French
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
  - 8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
  - 8:30—Struggle for Democracy
  - 9:10—Renegade
  - 10:00—News at Ten
  - 10:30—One West Waikiki
  - 11:15—The Bourne Identity
  - 12:00—Sisters
- MONDAY**
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—The Show With The Mouse
  - 2:30—Cowboy of the Moomeesa
  - 3:00—Gillette Sports Special
  - 3:30—Riding High
  - 4:00—Animal Show
  - 4:30—Ocean Girl



Lois and Clark (Superman), Thursday 8:30 pm

- 5:15—French Programs
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Neighbors
  - 8:00—Murphy Brown
  - 8:30—Babylon 5
  - 9:10—Highlander
  - 10:00—News at Ten
  - 10:30—Emergency Room(er)
  - 11:15—Homicide
- TUESDAY**
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—Sandocan
  - 2:30—C.R.O.
  - 3:00—Slippy
  - 3:30—The Album Show
  - 4:30—Square One T.V
  - 5:15—French Programs
  - 7:00—News in French
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Sara
  - 8:00—Tilt
  - 8:30—Encounter
  - 9:10—Nature of Things
  - 10:00—News at Ten
- WEDNESDAY**
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—Jonny Quest
  - 2:30—Super Daze
  - 3:00—Secrets of Treasure Island
  - 3:30—Spell Binder
  - 4:00—Monsters Today
  - 4:30—Border Town
  - 6:00—French Programs
  - 7:00—News in French
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Neighbors
  - 8:00—Grace under Fire
  - 8:30—Challenges
  - 9:10—Kung-Fu
  - 10:00—News at Ten
  - 10:25—Laud's Eod
  - 11:00—American Gothic
- THURSDAY**
- 2:00—Holy Koran

- 2:10—New Kids on the Block
- 2:30—My Little Fairy Tale
- 3:00—America's Funniest People
- 3:30—He Shoot He Scores
- 4:00—I Love Lucy
- 4:30—The Boy from Andromeda
- 5:00—French Programs
- 7:00—News in French
- 7:30—News Headlines
- 7:35—Trivial Pursuit
- 8:00—Parenthood
- 8:30—Lois and Clark (Superman)
- 9:10—Winfrey Show
- 10:00—News at Ten
- 10:30—Feature Film
- 12:00—Step By Step

- 5:00—Secrets de famille
- 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
- 6:00—Magazine
- 6:30—Fait pas rêver
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—Magazine pour tous

- MARDI**
- 5:00—Secrets de famille
  - 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
  - 6:00—Savoir plus santé
  - 7:00—Le journal
  - 7:15—Orient sur Seioe
- MERCREDI**
- 5:00—Secrets de famille
  - 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
  - 6:00—Ushug'a
  - 7:00—Le journal
  - 7:15—R = M6
- JEUDI**
- 5:00—L'invité de marque
  - 5:30—Fort Bayard
  - 7:00—Le journal
  - 7:15—Le dessin des cartes

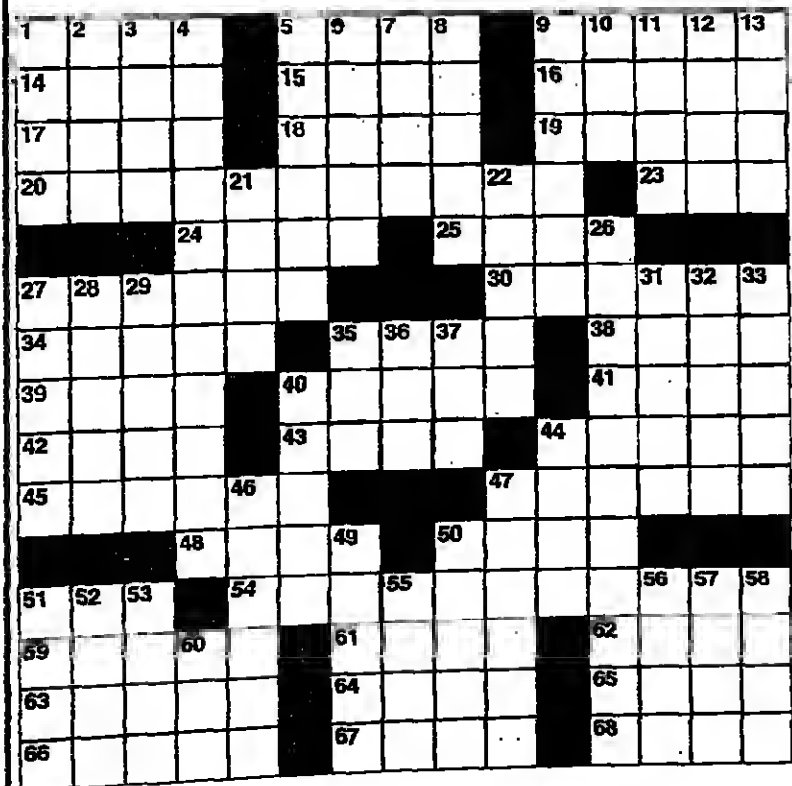
- VENREDI**
- 5:30—Madaote la conseillère
  - 7:00—Le journal
  - 7:15—Magazine

## PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

- SAMEDI**
- 5:00—Secrets de famille
  - 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
  - 6:00—La rose des vents
  - 7:00—Le journal
  - 7:15—Magazine

Programs are subject to change by JTV

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- © 1997, Tribune Media Services
- ACROSS**
- 1 Commandment word
  - 5 News
  - 9 Title of respect in colonial India
  - 14 Land a hand
  - 15 Hootbeat sound
  - 16 Banish
  - 17 Shankar opus
  - 18 Resort island
  - 19 In no way
  - 20 Recovered
  - 23 Outer, abbr.
  - 24 —yourself
  - 25 La Scala section
  - 27 Kind of bullet
  - 30 Wrinkle
  - 34 Girl fzz
  - 35 Wheel holder
  - 38 Food thickener
  - 39 Take — view of
  - 40 Previous
  - 41 Church tribunal
- DOWN**
- 1 Kind of way
  - 2 Lot
  - 3 Russian saint
  - 4 Promising
  - 5 Cream puff cousin
  - 6 Coquet
  - 7 Fuss
  - 8 Utter pompously
  - 9 Mailer
  - 10 Chopper
  - 11 Bee colony
  - 12 Holly
  - 13 Old-time actor, Lahr
  - 21 Performs
  - 22 More pleasing
  - 26 Navy VIP
  - 27 Mine cars
  - 28 Spokes
  - 29 Organic compound
  - 31 Old Greek marketplace
  - 32 Designating certain
  - 33 Expunge
  - 35 Miasma
  - 36 12
  - 37 Fate
  - 40 Early philosopher
  - 44 Mural's place
  - 46 Unimportant person
  - 47 Animal
  - 49 Additional person
  - 50 Carried
  - 51 Life of Riley
  - 52 Chunky portion
  - 53 — Alto, Cal.
  - 55 London gallery
  - 56 Actress Bayes
  - 57 Arthurian lady
  - 58 Marquis de
  - 60 Supply a crew

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

**Weekly Tip:** The sun's going from Libra to Scorpio. There's a flurry of activity. Garage sales and swap meets will do very well.

**Aries (March 21-April 19):** There is a flurry of activity. Make changes now. They'll be much harder later. Romance blossoms but there's not enough money.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20):** Get paperwork out of the way. You're at your most efficient. A partner demands more attention. Get used to it.

**Gemini (May 21-June 21):** A breakfast date is fun but don't be late to the job. There's money coming in, especially if you've worked to earn it.

**Cancer (June 22-July 22):** Handle the hard stuff. If you can do it quickly enough, it won't be overdue after all. You're much stronger with the moon in your sign.

**Leo (July 23-Aug. 22):** Contact your friend for the latest assignment. Get as much writing done as you can. You're confident but that may not be enough. A stubborn friend may stall long enough to win the argument.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** A friend of yours gets lots of attention. Some of it's even the positive kind. Provide support. You're helping more than you realize. Don't let a bully push you around. Do what's required and no more.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23):** Finish up whatever you've been working on. It's time to hand it in. If you go along with your boss's wishes, you'll make lots of points. If you argue, you won't. Save your comments for your friends.

**Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21):** You're lucky and getting luckier. Sign up for a cruise. Study your foreign language. You may need it soon. Laugh at the boss's lame jokes to improve your chances for a promotion. You'll still have to do the work, however.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Use new information to find a way to pay off your debts. Concentrate on studying finances. Travel looks attractive and so does someone who could take you there.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Get paperwork handled now. There won't be time later. Your life is chaotic. The pace is fast but you're learning a lot.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Focus on your work full time. If you do, you may be able to play soon. A humorless person may not share your enthusiasm for a new game.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20):** Your sweetheart's under pressure. Do what you can to lighten the load. You could feel a surge of new power. That's the sun going into Scorpio.

**If You're Having a Birthday This Week:** Take the vacation of your dreams. Sign up for a cruise. Push yourself farther than ever, literally and figuratively. A conflict leads to personal and career growth.

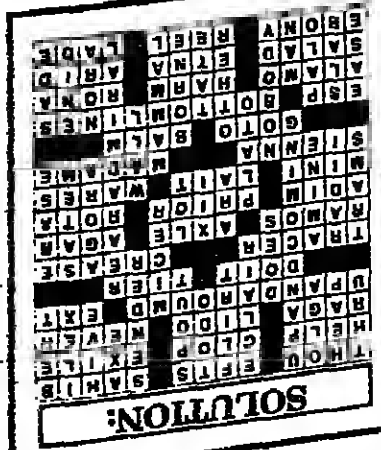
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Left out of the loop?



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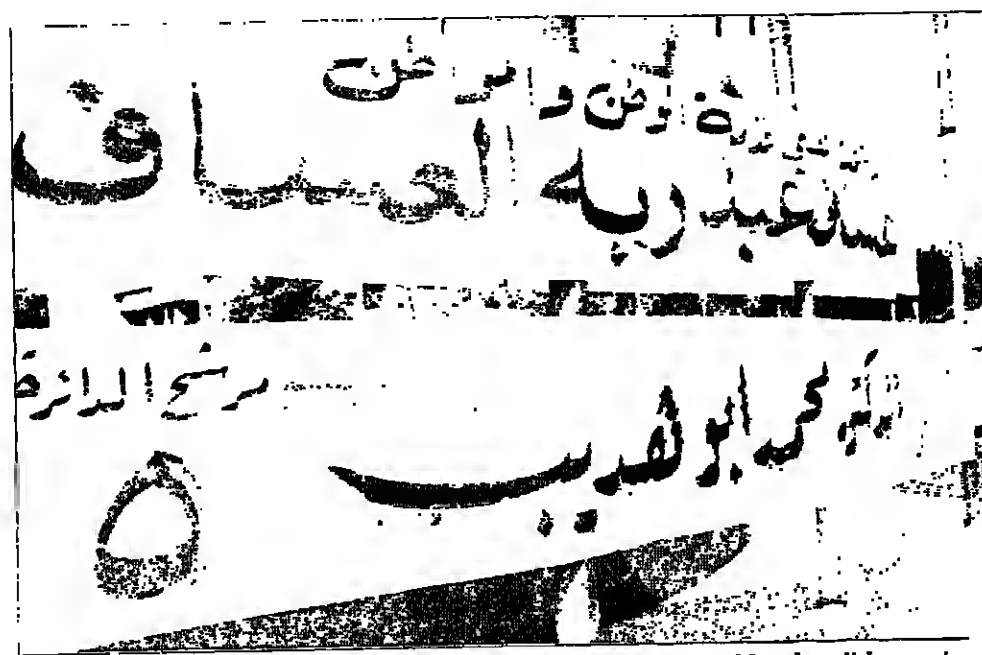
# Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Art et politique

## Slogans d'artiste

Malgré le mauvais temps, la plupart des banderoles électorales sont restées bien accrochées. Noires, vertes ou rouges, les slogans, à défaut d'intéresser les électeurs, égayaient leur quotidien. Mais qui se cache derrière toute cette littérature ?



«Les slogans que je réalise s'étalent sur 7 mètres de longueur», Munther, lithographe électoral.

Huit heures par jour parfois plus à dessiner des slogans électorales. C'est le travail de Munther Juma'a Yousef, un jeune Jordanien de 27 ans. Il a pourtant étudié la chimie, ce qui n'a rien à voir avec son actuelle activité mais il précise aussitôt : «J'ai commencé à faire mes premières lignes quand j'étais petit». Après l'université, il travaille. «Mon père a eu un accident mortel. A partir de ce moment-là, j'ai eu des responsabilités dans ma famille. Je devais donner à mes frères la possibilité de faire une carrière». Durant la campagne électorale, Munther n'a pas de temps à lui. Il travaille en même temps pour deux candi-

dates de la cinquième circonscription d'Amman. Pour chacun d'eux, il a déjà préparé 30 banderoles. «Les slogans que je réalise s'étalent sur 7 mètres de longueur. C'est vrai que cela fait beaucoup de travail mais ce n'est rien quand je vois le résultat», se réjouit-il. Munther dessine directement sur les banderoles qu'il déroule complètement sur le toit de son immeuble. Il écrit d'abord le slogan politique au crayon puis repasse avec de la couleur : noire, rouge ou verte selon les goûts. Pour réaliser ses œuvres, le jeune homme préfère être seul en écoutant la chaine libanaise Fayrouz. «Mais il y a des jours où la campagne de mes amis ne me déplaît pas, confie-t-il, ils apportent un peu

de sourire dans mon travail». Munther ne cache pas son peu d'intérêt pour la politique. C'est à peine s'il fait attention aux slogans qu'il recopie. Un jour, il a proposé quelques idées, comme défendre les droits des femmes. Sans succès. Depuis, il s'adonne à sa passion lithographique sans trop se poser de questions. Quand il a du temps libre, il cuisine, surtout des sucreries et il chante : «J'aime chanter en anglais et j'adore la dernière chanson d'Elton John : Candle in the wind», explique-t-il en toute simplicité. Au fond de lui, ce jeune homme frais et vigoureux rêve d'autres horizons que les banderoles propagandistes de Jordanie. Munther a déjà eu l'occasion de perfectionner son art à l'université où on composait des panneaux publicitaires. Mais il espère rejoindre un jour l'Irak, «berceau de l'art du Moyen-Orient», pour tout connaître des secrets de la lithographie arabe. ■

Aminah Ishtay

## La paix : une bonne affaire pour les patrons israéliens

Le patron du premier groupe textile israélien, Dor Lautman continue à miser sur la paix, malgré le blocage des négociations depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir du Premier ministre Benjamin Netanyahu. «Faire des affaires est le meilleur moyen pour établir la paix dans la région», explique-t-il. Dor Lautman fait partie du conseil d'administration du «Centre Peres pour la paix» inauguré cette semaine par l'ancien Premier ministre travailliste Shimon Peres à Tel-Aviv. Celui-ci avait été soutenu par les patrons israéliens, dans leur grande majorité, lors des élections de l'an dernier. Ils espèrent recueillir les dividendes de la paix avec l'émergence d'un «Nouveau Moyen-Orient», dont l'ancien Premier ministre s'était fait l'ardent avocat. Selon Dor Lautman, les tensions politiques n'ont pas affecté son groupe, dont le chiffre d'affaires atteint 300 millions de dollars, dont plus de 30% sont consacrés à l'exportation. Lui-même a donné l'exemple. Dans le sillage des accords d'autonomie signés en 1993 avec les Palestiniens, l'entreprise de M. Lautman a transféré une bonne partie de sa production dans les pays arabes pour profiter des bas salaires. «Nous avons des usines en Egypte et en Jordanie qui emploient 1900 personnes alors que nos effectifs en Israël sont de 3000 salariés», précise-t-il. L'hostilité envers la politique de Netanyahu dans les pays arabes ne crée pas un climat propice aux affaires, admet-il, mais en Egypte et en Jordanie, les ministères économiques, les autorités locales et les banquiers nous font le meilleur accueil dès qu'il s'agit d'investir dans le pays. Ces implantations nous aident, bien qu'elles aient un coût social en Israël, permettant de tisser des liens et selon ce chef d'entreprise, de renforcer la paix : «Les hommes d'affaires doivent privilégier la paix et faire pression sur leurs gouvernements respectifs pour que s'établisse la stabilité politique indispensable à toute prospérité».

Le Jourdain,  
on y revient.  
Tous les jeudis  
dans le Star  
645 380

## Nouvelles du Pays

Elections

## Dur, dur d'avoir un sondage

A douze jours des élections, il est difficile d'imaginer la composition de la prochaine chambre des députés. Les électeurs jordaniens ne croulent pas sous les sondages, c'est le moins que l'on puisse dire.

Le 13 octobre dernier, le quotidien al-Arab al-Yom a publié un sondage sur les élections : une enquête d'opinions réalisée sur un échantillon de 595 personnes et dans toutes les régions du royaume. D'après les résultats obtenus, 48% des Jordaniens croient que les élections ne seront pas honnêtes, 44% que la décision des Frères Musulmans de boycotter le scrutin est incorrecte ; 72% des personnes interrogées assurent qu'elles n'ont pas voté le 4 novembre. Enfin, 62% exigent l'annulation de la loi électorale dite de la «voix unique».

Le sondage d'al-Arab al-Yom est instructif mais reste l'exception qui confirme la règle : en Jordanie, pas d'enquêtes d'opinions ou de projections sur la future composition de la chambre des députés, pendant la campagne électorale.

La première raison semble d'ordre juridique. Ismail Abou Soundous, directeur adjoint du département des statistiques juridique que, selon la loi, aucun organisme ne peut effectuer de sondage sans l'autorisation préalable de son département, qui est un organisme indépendant d'Etat. Par ailleurs, seuls les échantillons de population que celui-ci met au point sont reconnus et peuvent être employés. Les panels dépendent des résultats du recensement national que le département organise tous les dix ou quinze ans. Sinon, les conclusions du sondage ne sont pas validées scientifiquement. Cet obstacle juridique a été confirmé par Mustapha Hamarneh, le directeur du Centre d'études stratégiques à l'université de Jordanie. L'institut n'a toujours pas publié les résultats d'une étude menée sur le chômage il y a un

an, parce qu'il n'a pas collaboré avec le département des statistiques.

D'autre part, Mustapha Hamarneh fait remarquer que les sondages d'opinions coûtent cher, de 50 à 60.000 JD, et sont difficiles à réaliser en raison des nuances tribales et politiques du pays.

Bref, les conditions de réalisation d'une enquête d'opinions ne sont pas simples. Cependant

certaines services d'Etat, tels que le ministère de l'Intérieur, effectueraient des sondages pour leur propre compte, sondages dont les résultats resteraient alors secrets. Et puis il y a le sondage d'al-Arab al-Yom. Le quotidien a précisé lors de sa publication que l'échantillon de personnes utilisé avait été conçu par le département des statistiques.

Par ailleurs, sans dire s'il a obtenu un accord en bonne et

due forme du département, le rédacteur en chef du journal Taher Udwan affirme avoir fait appel à un expert en sondages et d'avoir suivi ses recommandations. Quant au prix du sondage, le journaliste reste évasif. Refusant de donner un chiffre, Taher Udwan laisse entendre que le coût de l'opération n'a pas été considérable. Il est vrai que ce sont les propres journalistes et employés du journal

qui se sont transformés en sondeurs dans les différentes régions du pays pour les besoins de la cause. Le jeu en vaut-il la chandelle ? Le jour même de la publication de l'enquête, al-Arab al-Yom n'a sans doute pas augmenté sensiblement ses ventes. Mais le quotidien peut espérer des retombées après ce sondage en forme de scoop. ■

Suleiman Sweis



## Gare à la sondomania !

Les sondages d'opinions («démoscopies») étudient les attitudes, les opinions et autres caractéristiques de la population à l'aide de méthodes scientifiques. Ils font appel, pour ce faire, à des échantillons représentatifs, d'un ordre de grandeur de 1.000 à 2.000 personnes, qui permettent d'obtenir des résultats fiables sur l'opinion de l'ensemble de la population. En France, des sondages d'opinions sont menés systématiquement, en France, par un certain nombre d'instituts privés (Ipsos, Institut BVA, Sofres), mais ce sont les sondages d'opinions à caractère politique qui éveillent le plus l'intérêt du public. Les grands journaux et magazines français, ainsi que la télévision, publient à intervalles régulières les résultats de sondages d'opinions sur le baromètre politique, la popularité des partis et des grands leaders politiques, ainsi que sur des thèmes d'actualité les plus divers.

Cette frénésie des sondages, cette sondomania, est encore plus forte à l'occasion des élections. Matin, midi et soir, les Français sont alors assommés d'estimations, de projections et de pourcentages en tous genres. Or, même si les sondages ont atteint un très haut niveau de précision, il s'agit toujours d'instantanés : ce qu'on oublie souvent les commentateurs qui les analysent. C'est ainsi qu'en 1995, les sondages annonçaient Edouard Balladur devant Jacques Chirac au premier tour des élections présidentielles. Les observateurs s'appuyant à qui mieux mieux sur les prévisions des instituts sans tenir compte des marges d'erreur de plusieurs points en raison de l'indécision des électeurs. C'est finalement Chirac qui remporta l'élection. Depuis cet épisode, bien qu'ils les utilisent toujours abondamment, politiques, journalistes, commentateurs et opinion publique considèrent les sondages d'opinions avec méfiance, ou parfois avec humour, comme ici Plantu, dans le magazine L'Express, au moment des élections législatives de juin 97. ■



Météo

## Quand Amman devient une piscine

La semaine dernière, Amman a connu ses premières pluies torrentielles. Comme chaque année, les orages ont provoqué des inondations dans plusieurs rues de la capitale. Le Jourdain vous dit pourquoi.

Des pluies violentes : plusieurs mètres cubes d'eau s'abattent en quelques minutes sur la ville.

Un réseau d'égouts mal adapté : les conduits sont souvent trop petits pour accueillir le surplus d'eau et surtout pas assez nombreux. Selon la municipalité, Amman compte près de 220 kilomètres de canalisations de drainage alors qu'il en faudrait trois fois plus. D'après Ahmad Zoughoul, l'un des ingénieurs de la mairie, la ville devrait effectuer «plus de 60 millions de dinars de travaux pour avoir un réseau performant», capable d'absorber toute l'eau en cas de fortes pluies. Aujourd'hui encore certains quartiers de la ville ne sont pas équipés de conduits d'évacuation. «Le budget annuel est limité à environ un million de dinars par an», précise encore l'ingénieur.

La saleté, complice du mauvais temps. Pendant plusieurs mois d'affilée, il ne pleut pas à Amman. La poussière, le sable s'accumulent dans les canalisations et encrassent le réseau. Avant les premières averses, les services municipaux sont chargés de nettoyer par leurs dimensions étroites, ne sont pas faciles à recurer. Par ailleurs, le premier grand lessivage emportent avec lui toutes les «cochonneries» qui se sont déposées dans toute la ville.

Un relief de djebels : l'eau dégringole des différentes collines d'Amman vers les points les plus bas.

L'urbanisation réduit les zones d'infiltration. Avec le bitume et le béton, l'eau ne peut s'infiltrer dans le sol, comme elle le voudrait. Du coup, elle

ruisselle plus longtemps.

Le carrefour à l'intersection des rues Gardens et Ibn Sina, devant la grande surface «Safeway», était complètement inondé la semaine dernière. C'est l'exemple typique de ce qui peut arriver quand tous les facteurs décrits plus haut sont réunis. Le croisement ressemble à une cuvette qui reçoit par conséquent toutes les eaux descendant de Gardens Street. De plus, comme zone bétonnée, on ne fait pas mieux. Enfin, la municipalité a prévu d'y aménager un conduit d'évacuation adapté afin de faire face aux prochaines trombes d'eau. Un expert de

l'eau à Amman fait pourtant remarquer que dans ce domaine les investissements ont été jusqu'ici limités : la ville attendrait la manne de 150 millions de dollars promise par les bailleurs de fonds internationaux pour restaurer le réseau d'eau potable mais également pour des travaux d'assainissement. Quoi qu'il en soit, le grand nettoyage d'automne est terminé. Les pluies suivantes, moins boueuses, devraient être mieux absorbées par les égouts de la ville. De quoi nous faire oublier ce premier déluge... jusqu'à l'an prochain. ■

Le Jourdain

## C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Claude Chabrol. Madame Bovary, avec Isabelle Huppert (1988). Emma Bovary, fille d'un paysan, épouse un officier de santé. Pleine d'aspirations romanesques, elle est dégoûtée de sa vie ennuyeuse. Mercredi 29 octobre à 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Tél. : 637009/636445/612658.

Exposition 1

Picasso, Dali, Miró... Les plus grands peintres catalans de ce siècle sont à la Galerie nationale de Jordanie jusqu'au 28 octobre. Djebel Lweibdeh Mountaza circle. Tous les jours sauf mardi de 9h à 17h. Entrée libre.

Exposition 2

Découvrez la Bretagne avec les toiles de Patrice Cudennec exposées au CCF du 29 octobre au 26 novembre.

## Le satellite : objet de tous les désirs

La télévision par satellite est apparue en Jordanie avec la guerre du Golfe. Depuis, les paraboles ne cessent d'envahir les toits des villes du royaume. Mais l'introduction de programmes venus du monde entier divisent encore les foyers.

La détente, la distraction... personne ne peut s'en passer. A la fin d'une longue journée de travail, chacun de nous cherche à se reposer, à oublier les soucis de la vie quotidienne et tous ses petits dérangements. Bien sûr, à chacun sa manière. Il y a les sorties en boîte, les pique-niques, la pratique d'un sport. Malgré cette diversité, la télé et surtout le satellite se taillent la part du lion. Revenus limités ou simple habitude ? Le peuple jordanien est souvent qualifié de sérieux : il préfère passer son temps en famille que de sortir boire un peu avec des amis. Aussi en tenant à la maison, on a tous tendance à allumer la télévision sans même y penser. «La télévision aide à me remettre à l'aise, à me relaxer. Quand je regarde un film, je me sens tellement pris par l'action que je ne pense plus à rien. Et puis cela m'aide aussi à bien dormir», affirme Faris, architecte de 37 ans.

Aujourd'hui avec le satellite, c'est encore mieux. On peut faire le tour du monde en passant d'une chaîne à l'autre. Les satellites ont transformé notre planète Terre en un petit village. Les paraboles qui fleurissent sur les toits, un peu partout dans le royaume, ont vu le jour en Jordanie au début des années 90, plus précisément pendant la guerre du Golfe. Grâce au satellite, les gens pouvaient suivre les derniers développements de cette guerre «en direct» en regardant CNN. A l'époque le satellite était encore un luxe. Il est presque devenu aujourd'hui une nécessité. C'est en tout cas l'avis de Hind, femme au foyer : «Mon mari

est à la retraite mais il y a trois ans, il a commencé un projet agricole sur l'un de ses terrains à 200 kilomètres d'Amman. Il y va encore deux ou trois fois par semaine et son loisir préféré, quand il rentre à la maison complètement épuisé, c'est de regarder la télé, explique-t-elle. Les programmes de la première chaîne sont tellement ridicules qu'il préfère ceux de la deuxième. Et encore, parfois ils sont également manotons. Il nous arrive souvent de passer la soirée à jongler d'une chaîne à l'autre en espérant tomber sur un feuilleton intéressant ou un bon film. Alors il y a une semaine nous avons décidé d'acheter un satellite en raison de la variété des programmes proposés».

Pour ou contre ? Or en province, certains habitants ne savent même pas que la deuxième chaîne existe. «Avoir un satellite, il n'en est pas question, souligne Oroub

avec fermeté, déjà, vu ne regard jamais la deuxième chaîne, comment voulez-vous qu'on achète un satellite ? De plus, j'ai quatre enfants. Ils sont difficiles à contrôler. Souvent je les envoie dans la rue pour jouer avec les amis. Comme cela je suis sûre que la télé restera éteinte. Nous sommes une famille très conservatrice, très croyante... pour nous, la deuxième est presque un tabou».

Une fois introduit dans la maison, le satellite peut d'ailleurs rapidement se révéler très nuisible pour le foyer. Le satellite crée des problèmes conjugaux, des disputes entre les enfants qui n'arrivent pas à se mettre d'accord sur tel ou tel

programme. Se plaint Suha, qui a commencé à être en retard au travail le jour où le satellite a été installé. Je me suis tout le temps fatiguée et je n'ai plus eu le temps de faire grand chose à la maison».

Chez les jeunes, les points de vue divergent. Il y a les prudents : «Le satellite est une épée à double tranchant, estime Adel, étudiant à l'université de Jordanie, utilisé de manière appropriée, cela s'avère très bénéfique. Personnellement, le satellite m'enrichit mes connaissances dans les domaines qui m'intéressent. Mais l'absence de surveillance parentale peut être désastreuse pour les enfants». Il y a les inconditionnels comme Raula, qui a vraiment insisté pour avoir le satellite à la maison : «Cela me permet de rester en contact avec la langue italienne que j'ai étudiée pendant deux ans. Autrement j'ai du mal à trouver quelqu'un avec qui la pratiquer. Et puis les programmes qui passent à la télévision jordanienne sont ennuyeux, sans parler des émissions qui repassent sans arrêt». Il y a enfin les catégoriquement contraires. Ruba par exemple pense que le satellite est une perte de temps : «Dis qu'un se met devant l'écran, on ne bouge plus. La télé nous empêche de faire travailler notre esprit. Elle tue notre créativité. Je préfère m'occuper de temps en temps plutôt que de me sentir humiliée par une machine». Satellite ou pas, le débat reste ouvert. Pendant ce temps, la forêt de paraboles grignote le ciel de la Jordanie. ■

Runa Kavar-Bagaean



Seulement 5% des Jordaniens auraient chez eux la télévision par satellite.

فَكَذَا مِنْ الْأَحْوَالِ



# Not just super, but superior

By Mimi Avins

PARIS—Whoever made the observation that supermodels are freaks of nature was chewing on a mouthful of sour fruit. It's true enough that very thin women nearly 6 feet tall with pretty hair, narrow hips and symmetrical features are a misery to so many as to be statistically invisible. But they do exist, and if teenage girls didn't feel the hopeless need to defy and emulate them, they could probably be appreciated as skilled workers who help decorate our world.

The amazing thing about professional runway models is they get no help. No control top pantyhose to smooth a bulging tummy, no Wonderbra to push up what gravity has lowered, no opaque tights to cover a bruised leg. To most shows, they barely even wear underwear, the thing being all that separates them from total nudity beneath the clothes.

Up close, many of them are breathtaking. Some are painfully thin, awkward giraffes who just happen to wear clothes well. They range in age from 14 to 30, but the older models are likely to be in the Cindy Crawford class—women who've attained a diversified profile beyond modeling.

Recently, some designers have been favoring the naive look. When a new girl appears on the runway, all wide eyes and scrawny legs, we jaded fashion journalists roll our eyes and whisper, "She's 12." Let the designers talk all they want about freshness and innocence. There's something insulting about using prepubescent girls to show clothes that will be sold to the grown women who can afford them.

Inevitably, those of us who follow the silk and polyester road from Milan to Paris to New York develop the camaraderie of combat veterans. Feelings of affection and bitchiness alternate. When a well-known model has been missing from the runways for a while, the standard assumption is, "Oh, she's probably in rehab." In some cases, that's the truth. In others, it's a bum rap.

Between the ready-to-wear and couture

shows, models do have lives they return to, realities that include husbands and babies. Trish Goff, an American who started working at 14 and still isn't old enough to drink in most states has brought her infant daughter to work with her this season. Husbands and boyfriends often serve as helpers and managers, arranging transportation, keeping track of a complex schedule, or just offering foot rubs and a hedge against the loneliness of the road.

Many of the best runway models are of indeterminate age. Dressed in their borrowed finery, they appear far too self-assured to be really young, too flawlessly beautiful to be mature. An exotic stunner like Esther Canadas could be 18 or 35 (she's 20).

Fine-boned, classic beauties are in demand now, such as Danielle Z, a 22-year-old from West Virginia and Elsa Benitez, a 21-year-old Mexican who projects the qualities of the great Italian neorealist actresses.

Then along comes a surprise like Alek Wek, a statuesque 18-year-old from the southern Sudan with almost no hair, or Karen Elson, last year's "it" girl. Discovered at 16, the flaming redhead from Manchester, England, was signed by Chanel for its fall campaign, despite her because of a very unconventional look.

During the collections, the hours are long and the pace relentless. By the end of the Paris shows, the girls seem to drag themselves down the runway, their fatigue almost painful to watch. We won't shed any tears for these genetically blessed women, but they do work hard and face rejection. Designers can be fickle, casting Amazons one season, waifs another.

As someone who spends a lot of time looking at clothes, I would rather see them on a graceful beauty like Shalom Harlow than a real, flawed woman, no matter how big her heart or delightful her sense of humor. Call me square, but I just wish the girls would leave their nipple rings home.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

# Ewan McGregor has no ordinary career

Great Scot

By Paul Willistien

NEW YORK—Ewan McGregor's career was in the toilet.

That was a good thing. His career's now out of this world.

The young Scotsman who captivated fans as the toilet-swimming junkie Mark Renton in last year's astounding black comedy, "Trainspotting," recently completed filming for George Lucas' "Star Wars" prequel.

McGregor, who stars as an inept kidnapper in "A Life Less Ordinary," which opens on 24 October, has about half a dozen films he's completed or will be working on.

In "A Life Less Ordinary," McGregor plays a janitor named Robert. After being downsized out of a job, he takes revenge by kidnapping the CEO's daughter, Coline (Cameron Diaz). As a kidnapper, let's say that Robert is a good janitor.

What follows is a rowdy road movie set in the great American West that travels figuratively from heaven to hell and back again. The film co-stars Holly Hunter and Delroy Lindo as celestial cops on a mission (nm Gabriel).

McGregor, who turned 26 in June, starred in "Trainspotting," a \$2.3 million budgeted film released in 1996 which took in \$75 million worldwide and is the second highest grossing film in Great Britain, after "Four Weddings and a Funeral" ("The Full Monty" may surpass both).

His career got a big boost with his award-winning performance as a journalist in the grimly humorous "Shallow Grave" (1994).

The \$12 million budgeted "A Life Less Ordinary," which is being released by 20th Century Fox, reunites McGregor with the highly regarded "Trainspotting" and "Shallow Grave" team of director Danny Boyle, writer John Hodge and producer Andrew Macdonald.

Hodge said that McGregor's part in "A Life Less Ordinary" was written expressly for him. The grateful McGregor, in town for a round of interviews and to visit with his friends in Oshkosh who appeared on "Saturday Night Live," said he'd work with Boyle and company regardless of the script.

"They're true, inspirational filmmakers. I have complete trust and faith in them. What's brilliant about them is their loyalty and their belief in the team, and how the film is all-important. If I wasn't right for the part, I wouldn't be cast in it. I know that."

Apparently, writer-director Lucas also thought McGregor right for the part of young Obi-Wan Kenobi in "Star Wars: Episode I," first in a long-awaited prequel trilogy.

Phase one of principal photography wrapped 26 September at Levensden Studios in London, following location work in Italy and North Africa. According to the Fox Web site, Lucas plans to reassemble the cast next year for phase two of the filming. "Episode II" is scheduled for release in May 1999.

"Star Wars" was a brand-new thing for me," said McGregor. "I felt I was starting again in a way, 'cause I've never done a big (budget) movie before, nor have I ever done a movie that demanded so many special effects."

"It's incredibly hard work—those (special effects) films. It's a real slog. It's not about just sitting down and finding the scene, or blocking the scene and playing it. It's different, in a satisfying way."

McGregor said he was entranced by the "Star Wars" character or the film's storyline.

A native of Crieff, Scotland, McGregor worked at the Perth Repertory Theatre before training at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His first screen role was in 1993 as Hopper in Dennis Potter's BBC television series, "Lipstick On Your Collar."

"Star Wars," notwithstanding, the cheeky and conversationally profane McGregor said his fans were excited about his guest appearance on NBC-TV's Top 10 medical drama, "ER." "I've done 12 movies now, and people want, 'You're doing... ER!'"



McGregor recalled.

But McGregor may have provided himself the wrong kind of notoriety in Utah, where "A Life Less Ordinary" was filmed from September to mid-December 1996, after nine weeks of pre-production that began there in July.

He told *The New York Post* that during the three months he was in Utah to shoot the film he thought the state was "the most conservative, closed-minded, uptight place I've ever been."

Explained McGregor: "I've been caught saying the most awful things about Utah. I've said some flippant, rude things to journalists that suddenly came out in bold print. And I'm apologizing to everybody."

"In fact, they made us feel so welcome there. We had a really nice time

there. And it's a really beautiful state." Still, McGregor couldn't resist adding, "However, it is a rather strange town. Salt Lake, isn't it?"

McGregor doesn't know whether he would go to a premiere for "A Life Less Ordinary" in Salt Lake City, should one be held there. "I'm afraid of being shot by a Utah militiaman."

Upcoming for McGregor: "Eye of the Beholder," directed by Stephen Elliot ("The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert"); "The Rise and Fall of Little Voice," based on a stage show being adapted and directed by Mark Herman ("Brassed Off"); and "Rogue Trader," directed by James Dearden ("Fatal Attraction" screenwriter) from the 1995 book by Nick Leeson, the former Barings Bank derivatives trader serving 6 years in a Singapore prison for fraud after losing \$1 billion and breaking the bank.

McGregor's other credits include "Nightwatch," which hasn't been released domestically; "Velvet Goldmine," also to be released; "Brassed Off" (1997); "The Pillow Book" (1996); "Emma" (1996), and "Serpent's Kiss."

Of late, McGregor has had little time to hang out. "I like to look at my wife and kid and see what they look like," he said.

McGregor met his wife, Eve, a French native and production designer, during the making of a television show. They live in London with their daughter, Clara, 20 months old.

"I ride motorcycles—so I like to do that. When I get a moment, I play golf. I haven't got a handicap. I'm not there yet. But I played a lot in Utah."

"I'm not a great football player. It's my one failing as a bloke."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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THE STAR'S

# STATION WORKING COMPUTING & HIGH TECH INNOVATION

Edited by Zeid Nasser

## The freedom of the press becomes a fact: 'Net' freebies limit government interference

By Jabra Ghneim

ONE OF the greatest features about the Internet is its ability to break barriers, physical and conceptual.

In this Internet age, governments will no longer be able to infringe on the rights of people to express themselves. This week, I discovered new places in cyberspace, truly "Virtual Hyde Parks" where people can stand up and express themselves not only to their locale, but also to the world as a whole.

Among those places is an Internet site called GeoCities. In exchange for your personal information you can have a FREE Internet site with 2 megabytes of space, or about 700 pages of text. The site is a city which is divided into neighborhoods. Each neighborhood deals with a specific topic which you might like to discuss.

I chose the politics neighborhood (called Capitol Hill), which is very suitable for people with strong political opinions. One of the main things that those who sponsor the site want visitors to understand is that you can't use the site commercially, and that you can't use it to post any kind of porno material. I was impressed with this site for many reasons. One main reason was because of what sites like this mean for people in countries like Jordan where the democratic process and the nature of the social contract isn't fully understood.

It hasically means that people who make a living by expressing their opinions won't go

hungry because the government decides to shut them down. A friend of mine asked, "But can't a firewall be built to stop people from accessing these sites?" Actually, attempts to do so are



possible. Many neighboring countries are trying to provide such 'services' to their people, but this would fail.

There are many sites out there that you can be accessed by dialing the server they reside on. From there you can browse the net absolutely uncensored.

The only way to censor such services is by either censoring the telephone services or by shutting down telecommunication services in the whole country. But, even if governments do that, new encryption technologies which encrypt phone calls (e.g. PGP Phone by Phil Zimmerman) prevent anybody from censoring your calls. Back to GeoCities.com. How does a site like that earn money? The answer simply is advertising money.

I was so appreciative for the

### Computer & IT companies

Welcome to the Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 648296 or e-mail us at Star@NE.S.com.jo with your news and views.

## IT uses in higher education, enjoyed by a Jordanian abroad: A perspective from London!

By Jawad Abbassi

Reporting from London: "WHILE THE world drives on the right side of the road, the English drive on the wrong one," goes one joke.

Despite their particular driving idiosyncrasy, it seems the English managed to successfully steer impressive implementations of information technology in their universities.

As an enrolled student in an MSc program at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), I've had the chance to experience the schools impressive Information Technology "installations".

Right after students register, they receive information on their "user account" of the school's IT services. The account allows the users into the school's Windows NT based system and into their allocated disk space; an average of 15 MB. Every major building of the school has open access computer rooms that can be used by the students for general software, email, Internet browsing and so forth. The 5,000 plus student body has more than 500 PCs scattered in computer rooms for their use. In total, the school has more than 1,500 computers installed.

The IT services include an email account based on MS Exchange, which can also be accessed via the web. All PCs have a direct connection to the Internet, which—due to a pres-

ence of a proxy solution—is relatively fast and convenient.

Furthermore, whenever users log-on into any of the workstation PCs, they access a standard desktop that includes word processing, spreadsheet, database, Internet, statistics and other productivity software.

Windows NT's capabilities of assigning user profiles and permissions is utilized to make sure users don't accidentally change network settings or hardware configurations. To allow for maximum utility of the IT services, special training sessions are held for students who are not familiar with the range of software tools available on the schools' computers.

At LSE, all students, whatever their department may be, have universal and standardized student access to the IT resources of the school. This guarantees an educational experience where IT becomes an auxiliary to learning, research and communication. An example of this is how the public folders of MS Exchange are used by many professors to post relevant reading material and assignments in electronic form to their students.

Another very useful aspect of IT implementation at LSE, is the Information System used for the British Library of Political and Economic Science. The Oracle based "Unicorn" system uses a web interface that can be

accessed from outside of the library via LSE's home page (www.lse.ac.uk).

Students and researchers can search for the availability of any information from the comfort of their homes. The system further allows the users to place "Holds" on material borrowed by other users. Unicorn further has a feature where users can enter their library ID numbers to check what items they have borrowed and their due date of return as well as checking for the availability of items they had placed a hold on. While UNICORN offers a very useful database for the physical items in the library, another system allows to search on-line CD ROMs and their contents. An example of the CDs available is one that holds the editions of the Economist, whose text can be searched for any particular keyword. Universities in Jordan should address Information Systems similarly, where emphasis on the utility of IT is demonstrated to all academic disciplines. Granted, our ex-colonial masters drive on the wrong side of the road and have perplexing separation of hot and cold water tabs in their sinks. This however should not hinder us from adopting some of their more convenient manners. The IT situation at LSE is one good example. ■

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## INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

### Why are notebooks still behind in Jordan

ONE HAS to wonder why the notebook PC market has not taken off, especially as it's been around two to three years since notebook PCs dropped in price, making them about 30% more expensive than their desktop counterparts. Other words, the financial obstacle is partly removed and the function of mobility offered by notebook PCs should make up for that reasonable difference in price!

However, a main reason that notebooks haven't caught on seems to be that the desktop PC is still in the growth stage in our country, and has not yet matured to a degree for consumers to be able to start looking at other alternatives like notebook PCs and Personal Digital Assistants (like the Apple Newton or units from Sharp, Philips and others).

Most customers still want to purchase desktop computers to begin with. It appears that their is an idea in the heads of Jordanian customers that notebook PC are a second PC, getting the desktop first.

This could have been true several years ago when a notebook PC couldn't house full-multimedia features (CD-ROM sound card and built-in speakers); the expandability of notebook PCs was somewhat limited.

Now, though, this has all changed with notebook PCs rivaling their desktop counterparts on almost every aspect of computing.

Wider screens, reaching 11 to 11.5 inches in many cases, and very improved expandability are features that have come together with a lower weight.

The result, is a totally new concept of computing, on the move. Of course, these developments have been around for two years now, and it's about time we started to see notebook PC sales pick up in Jordan!

Some computer suppliers I spoke to, said that, in response to the relatively slow demand on notebooks, they don't stock many units. In fact, most of them offer notebook models of the brands they represent on order.

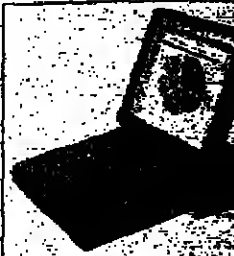
Another point made by suppliers, which provides interesting insight into the Jordanian business environment, is that most buyers don't need a mobile PC at all. Most Jordanian businesses that purchase PC systems have "stable" PC operating staff who stay in the office. As for sales or marketing staff, they rarely even carry an electronic organizer, let alone carry a full-fledged notebook PC.

Notebook PC buyers, so far, are a limited number of busy business executives or home computer hobbyists who can understand the novelty of a notebook PC and appreciate its capabilities.

Having said all this, it goes without saying that most PC suppliers exhibiting at the Middle East Technology Show (METS) '97 will be showcasing notebook PCs at their booths. The question is how many do they have in stock and what are the hopes to sell?

A "classy" notebook looks great at a show, but how many people want to take it home?

I don't know about you readers out there, but I wouldn't mind a lovely notebook PC myself. One with a powerful Pentium processor, full multimedia, built-in modem and a wider-than-average screen. Maybe it's time I changed my old 486 notebook, and my old 486DX desktop. Now, if I were to buy one new, amazing PC to replace both, what would it be: a desktop PC or a notebook? Well, obviously, it seems that even a notebook advocate like myself has to think about that. So much for changing attitudes! ■



## Ideal Systems & Mac OS 8 Seminar

IDEAL SYSTEMS, distributors of Apple Computers in Jordan, and a member of the Ideal Group of companies, held a seminar at Marriott Hotel on Monday 20th of October 1997 on the new Apple Macintosh Operating System (Mac OS 8).

The seminar which was attended by a large number of Macintosh users started by a welcoming message presented

by the President of Ideal Group, Mr. Karim Kassar, who welcomed the audience and briefed them on the Ideal Group of companies that started back in 1987, with Apple Computers as the first company to be presented in Jordan by the group, and

said that now the group has four computer companies all working to deliver total integrated solutions for the local and international market. Ideal Group now has over 100 employees serving thousands of customers. Ideal Group represents more than 14 different companies and has one of the largest software houses in Jordan and the Middle East, IdealSoft.

Mr. Kassar stressed the idea of offering high level services to customers and integrated net-

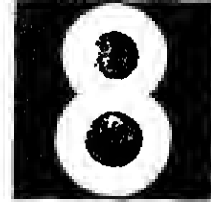
working software and hardware solutions to them.

The Mac OS 8 was presented to the audience by the Support Manager, Mr. Ghassan Al-Khatib, and it clearly showed that Apple's innovations are still leading the way for other to follow in advanced operating systems.

The main points that the Mac OS 8 had were Enhanced Ease of Use and system responsiveness, new efficient multitasking, state-of-the-art multimedia, easy PC file and media exchange, built in Internet/Intranet access and excellent backward compatibility.

It is also worth mentioning that Microsoft have recently purchased stock in Apple, investing \$150 million dollars in Apple. ■

Mac OS 8



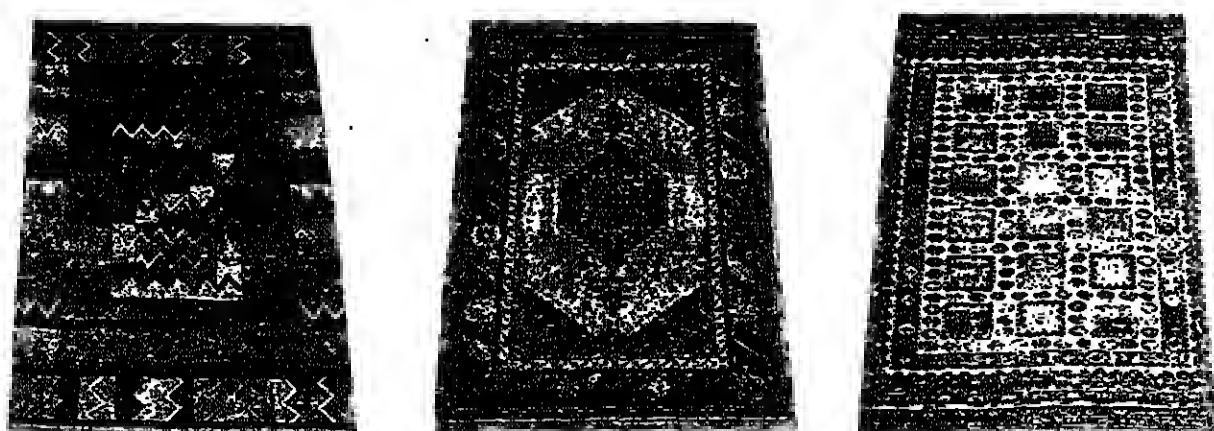
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## SHASHA'A for Carpets



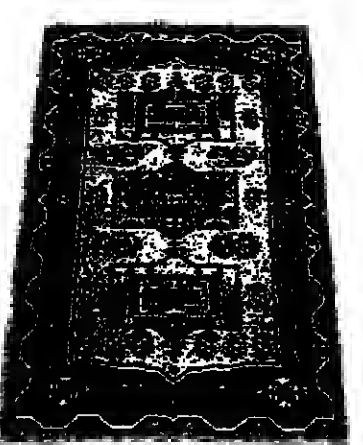
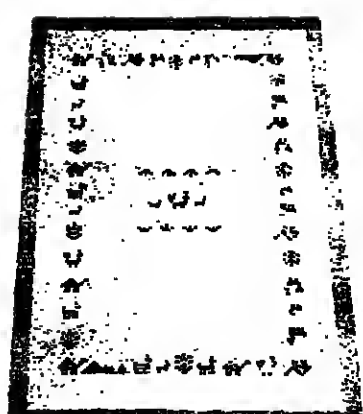
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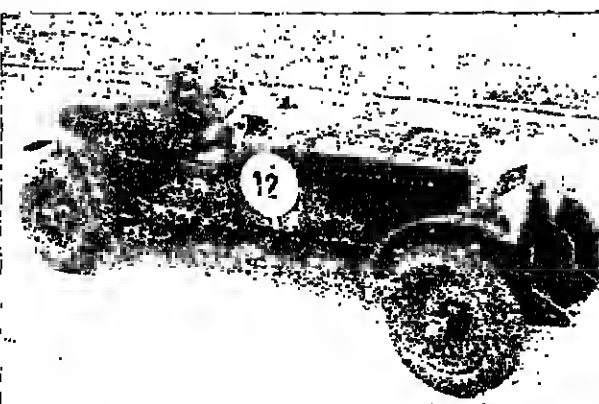
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## Historic return to Peking

NINETY YEARS ago, Prince Scipione Borghese entered Paris 60 days after leaving Peking to win the first Peking-Paris Rally. In 1997 CarWorld is pleased to announce it is following one of only two all-women teams in the second Peking-Paris event. Jennifer Gillies and Francesca Sternberg are competing in this amazing race in a 1964 Volvo Amazon, called Gordon. We will be putting up pictures and regular reports from the pair as they race the 10,000 miles back into Europe.



Back in 1907, Prince Scipione was the first of four crews to reach the French capital, the fifth team in a Conant cycle-car, failing to finish; they were found dying of thirst in the Gobi Desert, their mistake having been to throw out the bottles of champagne they were carrying to save weight. The Prince won the race driving an Itala, and was even able to indulge himself with a 2,000km diversion to St Petersburg en route, where he had been invited to a gala dinner held in his honour. Apparently, there were "many fine ladies" attending, so what could he do but go!

Anyway, after a good night on the town in imperial Russia, he set off and rejoined the race and arrived in Paris a full week in front of the others. The second race features rather more than the five competitors from the original race, 96 in all will set off from Peking on Saturday 6th September, although only around a fifth of these are expected on the Place de la Concorde at the end, some 43 days later.

In between, the competitors will pass through China, Tibet, Nepal, India and Pakistan, before entering into Europe via Iran and Turkey. Once in Europe their route includes Greece, Italy, Germany and finally France, seems unlikely on their timetable, that any rovers will be able to stop off for any time at the ball. The event has been organized by Philip Young, who since forming the Classic Rally Association, has already organized a long-distance European and African event for classic cars. His experience at organizing similar events as well as competing in them meant he had valuable experience when it came to solving the political problems the Peking-Paris event threw up.

The entrants come from all over the world and although there are 39 from the UK, fewer than 25 other countries are represented, including the USA, Malaysia, China, Greece, Iran and Singapore. Amongst the competitors, who are all driving cars at least 30 years old, are the Duke of Somerset, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, the Crown Prince of Malaysia, the Rt Hon Sir David Steel and Baron Willem Benckow van Schoonhoven of the Netherlands. So, we hope you will stay with us as we follow the exploits of Gordon and his crew. In the meantime, find out more about this incredible rally. ■

## Federal Express holds Golf tournament

FEDERAL EXPRESS Jordan sponsored on Friday 17 October, as part of the company's support of sports, an open golf tournament at the Bishara Golf Club.

In a unique action, and especially for this event, parachuters from the Royal Jordanian Parachute Club landed on the golf course bringing down with them the trophies for the winners, a FedEx banner was flying in the sky by one of the parachuters. It was a great scene for everyone, and was well appreciated by Federal Express Jordan who gave a special trophy to the Director of the Club, Mr Samih Janakat.

General Manager of Federal Express Jordan, Ms Dina Faidi, gave away the FedEx trophies and the prizes to the winners of this tournament who came as follows:

The Champion: Mr. Farington  
1st Place Low Handicap: Mr. Telford  
2nd Place Low Handicap: Mr. Abu Al Hawa  
3rd place Low Handicap: Mr. Auh  
1st place High Handicap: Mr. Al Ameen  
2nd place High Handicap: Mr. Mussallam  
3rd place High Handicap: Mr.

Aurmond  
Nearest to the pin hole #4: Mr. Pauley

Nearest to the pin hole #6: Mr. Abu Al Hawa

Nearest to the pin hole #8: Mr. Auh

Longest Drive for hole #7: Mr. Rafter

Longest Drive for hole #5: Mr. Auh

In a special FedEx competition, which Ms Faidi had arranged after the tournament to give a chance for all guests to see the players in action, whereby the player who hit the ball closest to the hole #10 won a special prize given by FedEx Jordan, the lucky winner was again the champion of the tournament Mr Farington.

The prizes which was given for the winners was offered from several loyal clients of Federal Express Jordan, such as



Rama Consulting, Abu Shaqra Trading, EuroDollar, Orientals Tours, Bell Al Maqdes tours, Systems, Jordan Book Center, Petra Tours, Universal Sales, Zohrab and Coca Cola, in addition to prizes presented by FedEx Jordan.

Ms Faidi, and after the success of this tournament and in support of Jordanian sports, the Federal Express Golf Tournament will become a yearly event. ■

Official figures show that 1.3 million voters registered, 70 percent of the registered voters.

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